



## METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING IN GENERATION Z LINGUISTICS STUDENTS

### ESTRATEGIAS METACOGNITIVAS PARA EL DESARROLLO DEL PENSAMIENTO CRÍTICO EN ESTUDIANTES DE LINGÜÍSTICA DE LA GENERACIÓN Z

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#### ABSTRACT

This article examines the use of metacognitive strategies to develop critical thinking and argumentation skills in linguistics students (Generation Z), who face difficulties processing information in depth and constructing logical discourse. The purpose of the article was to evaluate the potential of these strategies for developing critical thinking and argumentation. A mixed-methods study was conducted with 15 first-year linguistics students at NUST MISIS. Four reflective methods were implemented. Assessment consisted of impromptu monologues before and after the intervention, using CEFR-aligned criteria. Based on the results, 80% of participants improved their scores. The low level decreased from 33% to 7%, while the high level increased from 13% to 40%. Qualitative analysis revealed better argument structure, use of examples, and discursive coherence. Metacognitive strategies are effective for enhancing critical thinking and argumentation in this population by fostering awareness of discourse construction processes and self-regulation of learning.

#### Keywords:

Metacognitive Strategies, Critical Thinking, Argumentation, Generation Z, Linguistics Students, Reflective Methods.

#### RESUMEN

Este artículo examina el uso de estrategias metacognitivas para desarrollar el pensamiento crítico y las habilidades argumentativas en estudiantes de lingüística (Generación Z), quienes enfrentan dificultades para procesar información en profundidad y construir un discurso lógico. El propósito del artículo fue evaluar el potencial de estas estrategias para el desarrollo del pensamiento crítico y la argumentación. Se realizó un estudio de métodos mixtos con 15 estudiantes de primer año de lingüística en NUST MISIS. Se implementaron cuatro métodos reflexivos. La evaluación consistió en monólogos improvisados antes y después de la intervención, utilizando criterios alineados con el MCER. Según los resultados, el 80% de los participantes mejoraron sus puntuaciones. El nivel bajo disminuyó del 33% al 7%, mientras que el nivel alto aumentó del 13% al 40%. El análisis cualitativo reveló una mejor estructura argumentativa, uso de ejemplos y coherencia discursiva. Las estrategias metacognitivas son efectivas para mejorar el pensamiento crítico y la argumentación en esta población al fomentar la conciencia de los procesos de construcción del discurso y la autorregulación del aprendizaje.



**Palabras clave:**

Estrategias Metacognitivas, Pensamiento Crítico, Argumentación, Generación Z, Estudiantes de Lingüística, Métodos Reflexivos.

**INTRODUCTION**

Communication skills constitute an indispensable professional tool in contemporary society. The current labor market increasingly demands linguists who not only possess a high level of linguistic proficiency but also demonstrate well-developed critical thinking and strong argumentative abilities. These competencies go beyond the requirements traditionally established by educational standards and reflect the need for professionals capable of analyzing, evaluating, and constructing knowledge in complex and dynamic environments. In this context, higher education institutions face the challenge of preparing students who can effectively integrate language skills with higher-order cognitive abilities.

Current university students largely belong to Generation Z, a cohort shaped by rapid technological advancement and digital environments. These learners are characterized by high technological competence and familiarity with digital tools; however, they also exhibit certain cognitive patterns that directly influence their learning processes. One of the most notable characteristics is their fragmented processing of information, commonly referred to as “clip thinking,” which tends to hinder sustained attention and deep analytical reasoning (Antonova, 2019). While these students often excel in performing algorithmic or task-based activities, they frequently encounter difficulties when required to engage in extended reasoning, construct coherent discourse, or develop well-supported arguments (World Economic Forum, 2023).

This fragmented cognitive style poses a significant challenge in the context of foreign language learning. The ability to produce continuous, coherent, and logically structured discourse is essential for effective communication, particularly in academic and professional settings. However, Generation Z students often struggle to maintain a consistent argumentative line and to organize ideas in a structured manner (Leontieva & Kotenko, 2017). These difficulties are closely linked to the development of critical thinking, defined as the capacity to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information. Research has demonstrated that critical thinking functions as a predictor of academic success in foreign language learning, particularly in English (Kupriyanov et al., 2023). Consequently, the pedagogical challenge extends beyond teaching vocabulary and grammar, requiring instead the deliberate development

of critical thinking and argumentative skills through approaches that promote metacognitive awareness (Flavell, 1979).

From a theoretical perspective, communicative competence, as defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, encompasses linguistic, socio-linguistic, and pragmatic components (Council of Europe, 2020). Among these, the pragmatic component plays a central role in enabling learners to structure discourse effectively and achieve communicative goals. It involves elements such as coherence, cohesion, fluency, flexibility, and thematic development, all of which are essential for constructing meaningful and purposeful communication. However, the acquisition of pragmatic competence is particularly complex, as it requires not only linguistic knowledge but also an understanding of context, interactional norms, and discourse organization (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013).

For Generation Z learners, the development of pragmatic competence is further complicated by their tendency toward fragmented information processing (Antonova, 2019; Leontieva & Kotenko, 2017). Empirical studies have established a strong relationship between argumentative quality and pragmatic features, including logical organization, coherence, and the effective use of examples (Qin & Karabacak, 2010; Wingate, 2012). The ability to develop ideas coherently and support them with relevant evidence requires higher-order cognitive skills such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and self-regulation (Facione, 1990; Paul & Elder, 2006). In this regard, the observed correlation between critical thinking and academic performance reinforces the importance of fostering these competencies in language education (Kupriyanov et al., 2023). Therefore, addressing the pragmatic component necessarily involves strengthening students’ argumentative abilities and critical thinking through targeted pedagogical strategies.

Metacognition emerges as a key concept in this process. Initially defined as the ability to reflect on and regulate one’s own thinking processes, metacognition encompasses both metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation (Flavell, 1979). Metacognitive knowledge includes declarative, procedural, and conditional aspects, while metacognitive regulation involves planning, monitoring, and evaluating cognitive activities (Schraw & Dennison, 1994). The literature highlights a strong interconnection between metacognition and critical thinking, suggesting a potential convergence between these constructs in educational contexts (Ford & Yore, 2012). By fostering awareness of cognitive processes, metacognitive strategies

enable learners to better organize information, construct arguments, and evaluate the quality of their reasoning.

In language education, the implementation of reflective and metacognitive strategies has proven particularly effective in activating these processes. Activities that require students to organize ideas, formulate questions at different cognitive levels, analyze relationships between causes and effects, and engage in systematic self-evaluation contribute to deeper understanding and more structured thinking. These practices not only enhance comprehension but also improve argumentative competence by promoting clarity of ideas, coherence of discourse, and the use of well-founded justifications. As a result, learners become more capable of producing structured, logical, and persuasive arguments.

Recent research supports the effectiveness of integrating metacognitive strategies with critical thinking development in improving argumentative competence among learners of English as a foreign language (Pelenkahu et al., 2024; Saadi, 2025). This integrative perspective suggests that metacognitive strategies function as mechanisms that activate planning, monitoring, and evaluation processes within discourse production, thereby strengthening critical thinking and resulting in more robust argumentation. This improvement is reflected in the ability to formulate clear theses, provide relevant examples, construct coherent justifications, and consider alternative perspectives.

In addition to cognitive and metacognitive dimensions, the role of digital competencies has become increasingly relevant in contemporary education. Recent contributions emphasize that innovation in teaching practices must incorporate the development of digital competencies as an essential component of professional training (Acosta-Servín et al., 2025). Digital environments not only shape how students access and process information but also influence how they construct knowledge and communicate ideas. Therefore, integrating digital tools into pedagogical strategies can support the development of critical thinking and argumentation by facilitating access to diverse sources, promoting collaborative learning, and encouraging reflective practices.

Similarly, the relationship between digital competencies and foreign language learning has been highlighted as a key factor in higher education. Digital literacy enables students to engage more effectively with linguistic content, participate in interactive learning environments, and develop communicative competence in a globalized context (Lavado-Rojas et al., 2025). The integration of digital and metacognitive strategies provides a comprehensive framework for addressing the challenges associated with Generation Z learners, as it combines technological engagement with reflective and analytical processes.

In this context, the incorporation of reflective methodologies in language teaching represents a strategic approach to enhancing both pragmatic competence and critical thinking. By encouraging students to actively engage in their learning processes, reflect on their reasoning, and evaluate their performance, these methods contribute to the development of more autonomous and competent learners. Ultimately, this approach aligns with the broader objective of higher education to prepare individuals who are capable of navigating complex communicative situations, constructing knowledge critically, and participating effectively in professional and academic contexts.

The aim of this study was to empirically evaluate the potential of metacognitive strategies to foster the development of critical thinking and argumentation in linguistics students. Through this approach, it seeks to contribute to the ongoing discussion on innovative pedagogical practices that respond to the cognitive, technological, and communicative characteristics of Generation Z learners, offering a comprehensive framework for enhancing language education in contemporary contexts.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

To achieve the objective of the study, a mixed-methods approach was employed, integrating both theoretical and practical methods. The research was conducted during the 2024–2025 academic year at the National University of Science and Technology MISIS (NUST MISIS) and was structured into several key stages.

The first stage involved the development of the theoretical framework. A comprehensive review of the academic literature was carried out, focusing on the core concepts underpinning the study, including the characteristics of Generation Z, metacognition, critical thinking, argumentation, and reflective methods. This analysis enabled the identification of conceptual relationships between structured reflection, metacognitive awareness, and the quality of oral argumentation, thereby providing a solid foundation for the empirical component of the research.

The second stage consisted of designing a set of instructional tasks. These tasks were developed based on metacognitive strategies, particularly reflective methods, and were aligned with the curriculum for first-year students at NUST MISIS. The design was also informed by the textbook *Outcomes Upper-Intermediate*. The tasks were specifically structured to activate key metacognitive processes, including planning, monitoring, and evaluating discourse. At the same time, they were aimed at strengthening essential components of critical thinking, such as clarity, accuracy, relevance, depth, and logical consistency in argumentation.

The third stage involved the implementation of a pre-test and post-test design to assess changes in students' levels of critical thinking and argumentative competence. Students were evaluated through improvised monologues, which allowed for the observation of spontaneous discourse production. The assessment criteria, originally focused on thematic development, structure, and cohesion, were reconceptualized as indicators of critical thinking. Thematic development was interpreted as the ability to elaborate on an idea and support it with evidence, reflecting depth of reasoning. Structure referred to the logical organization of arguments, indicating clarity and coherence, while cohesion was associated with the smooth and meaningful connection of ideas, reflecting precision and relevance.

In addition, a qualitative analysis of the students' discourse was conducted to identify patterns of improvement in argumentation. This analysis focused on aspects such as the use of supporting examples, the structuring of thesis statements and conclusions, and the presence of logical transitions between ideas. The collected data were systematically analyzed to evaluate the effectiveness of metacognitive strategies and to determine their potential for enhancing critical thinking and argumentative skills among linguistics students.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the empirical part of the study, in which a set of tasks based on metacognitive strategies (reflective methods) was developed and implemented to foster critical thinking and argumentative skills among first-year linguistics students at the National University of Science and Technology MISIS (NUST MISIS). The study was conducted in three stages: diagnostic, formative, and control.

### Initial Assessment of Critical Thinking and Argumentation Levels in Linguistics Students

The objective of the diagnostic stage was to assess the initial level of development of students' argumentation and critical thinking skills, operationalized through the pragmatic component of communicative competence, among first-year linguistics students with a declared B2 (upper-intermediate) level of English. To evaluate this, participants were asked to deliver a two-minute improvised monologue on the topic "How food reflects cultural identity," simulating a presentation in a UNESCO forum.

Three main evaluation criteria were established, each rated on a scale from 0 to 3 points, allowing for a maximum score of 9 points. The first criterion, thematic development, assessed the ability to address the topic and provide arguments supported by examples. A score of 0

indicated that the monologue did not address the topic and lacked arguments or examples; 1 point indicated that the topic was addressed but with weak arguments and/or no examples; 2 points were awarded when the topic was developed with arguments supported by one or two examples; and 3 points indicated a fully developed topic with clear and logical arguments supported by three or more relevant examples.

The second criterion, structure, evaluated the logical organization of the discourse. A score of 0 indicated the absence of a clear structure, such as a missing introduction, body, or conclusion; 1 point was assigned when one part was missing or the parts were poorly connected; 2 points indicated an adequate structure with some imbalance among the parts; and 3 points corresponded to a well-structured monologue with balanced and interrelated components.

The third criterion, cohesion and coherence, measured fluency and transitions between ideas. A score of 0 indicated a lack of logical transitions and disconnected sentences; 1 point reflected basic cohesion with generally logical but occasionally uneven transitions; 2 points indicated mostly logical transitions with minor inconsistencies; and 3 points indicated advanced cohesion, with consistently smooth and logical connections between ideas.

The obtained scores were categorized into three proficiency levels: low (0–4 points), intermediate (4–7 points), and high (8–9 points). The results revealed a predominance of the intermediate level, achieved by eight students (53% of the sample). Five participants (33%) were classified at the low level, while only two students (13%) reached the high level.

Following the analysis of students' performance, several key challenges in argument construction were identified. First, structural inconsistencies were observed, particularly the omission of essential parts of the discourse, most commonly the conclusion, which weakened the overall argumentative thesis. Second, weak exemplification was noted, characterized by an overreliance on abstract statements without concrete examples to support arguments. Finally, incoherent transitions were identified, including abrupt shifts between ideas, which negatively affected clarity and fluency. These findings informed the design of the subsequent set of tasks based on metacognitive strategies.

### Implementation of a Task Set Based on Metacognitive Strategies to Develop Critical Thinking and Argumentation (Pragmatic Component)

In line with the study's hypothesis that metacognitive strategies promote the development of critical thinking and argumentation, a set of tasks grounded in these methods

was designed. All tasks were centered on the theme “Food and Culinary,” reflecting the corresponding unit from the textbook *Outcomes Upper-Intermediate*, which aligns with the curriculum for first-year linguistics students at NUST MISIS.

One of the key activities involved the use of the Fishbone Diagram (Figure 1), which was adapted to help students de-construct and plan monologues through cause-and-effect analysis, a fundamental skill in critical thinking. In this task, students worked with a recipe text, identifying the central problem, such as how to prepare a specific dish, along with its key components, including ingredients, steps, and presentation suggestions. After analyzing the text, students were required to deliver a two-minute speech on the same topic, focusing on coherence and argumentative structure.

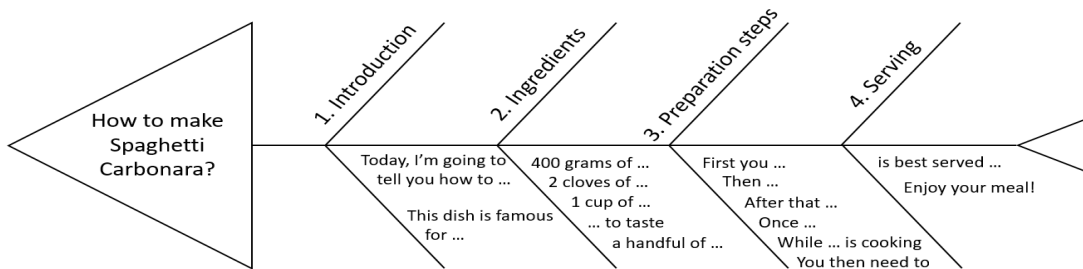


Figure 1. Fishbone Diagram completed based on the Carbonara pasta recipe.

The “Bloom’s Daisy” method was used to enhance higher-order thinking skills, including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Students were asked to read the text *Food, Friends, Family* from their textbook (*Outcomes Upper-Intermediate*) and, working in small groups, generate questions across six levels (see Figure 2), which required them to process information at different cognitive depths. Subsequently, they worked with useful phrases for constructing monologues, classifying them into three categories: expressing opinion, providing examples, and structuring discourse, as shown in (Figure 3)

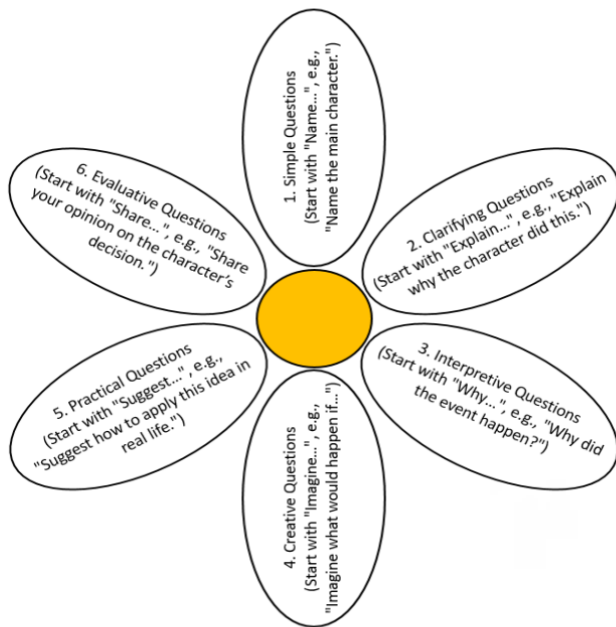


Figure 2: Types of questions and examples according to the “Bloom’s Daisy” method.

Sources: Bloom et al. (1956).

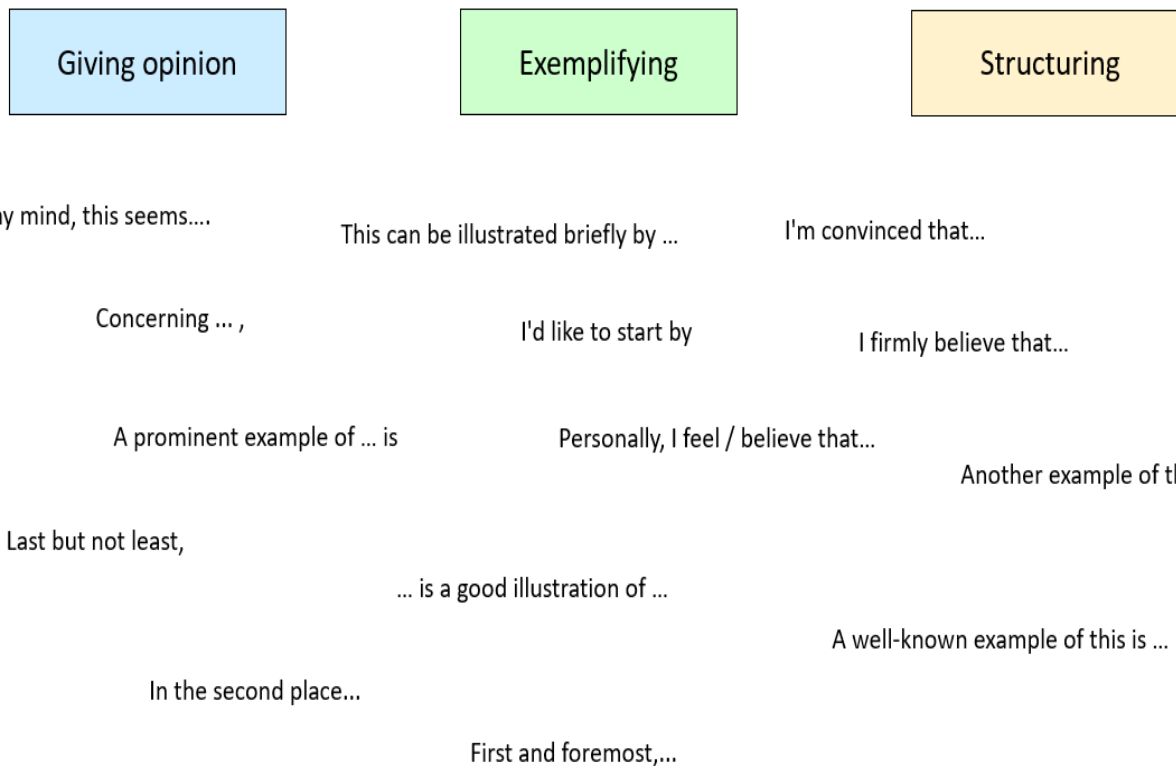


Figure 3: Exercise for practicing useful phrases in monologues

After working with the phrases, students discussed the questions by expressing their opinions and providing arguments and examples, thereby improving their skills in idea synthesis and the use of cohesive devices in support of argumentation.

The “Cinquain” method was employed to develop planning skills, synthesis, and conceptual precision, including paraphrasing and thematic development. Students created a five-line poem with a strict structure (Tabla 1) and then transformed their poems into a continuous speech based on the cinquains in the form of a one-minute monologue, incorporating examples. This exercise trains the ability to synthesize complex ideas into a logical structure and subsequently expand them while maintaining argumentative coherence.

Tabla 1: Example of a cinquain on the topic “Food and Culinary”.

One Noun	Food
Two adjectives/adverbs	Delicious, comforting
Three verbs	Sprinkle, peel, soak
Fourd-word phrase	Helps to brings people together
One Word (synonym or association)	Nourishment

This task, based on the reflective method “All in My Hands,” focused on analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of both the students’ discourse and a video presentation (TED Talk by Michael Silverstein: *The Future of Food*), thereby activating metacognitive evaluation processes. An analytical framework for evaluating the speaker’s performance was provided (see Figure 4), and after watching the video, students discussed it in small groups.

1. Is the topic explored in depth? Are there enough examples, facts, or arguments to support the main points?
2. Is there a clear introduction, body, and conclusion?
3. Are linking words/phrases used effectively to improve clarity?
4. Are ideas presented in a logical sequence, or are there sudden jumps in reasoning?
5. Does the speech align with its intended purpose?

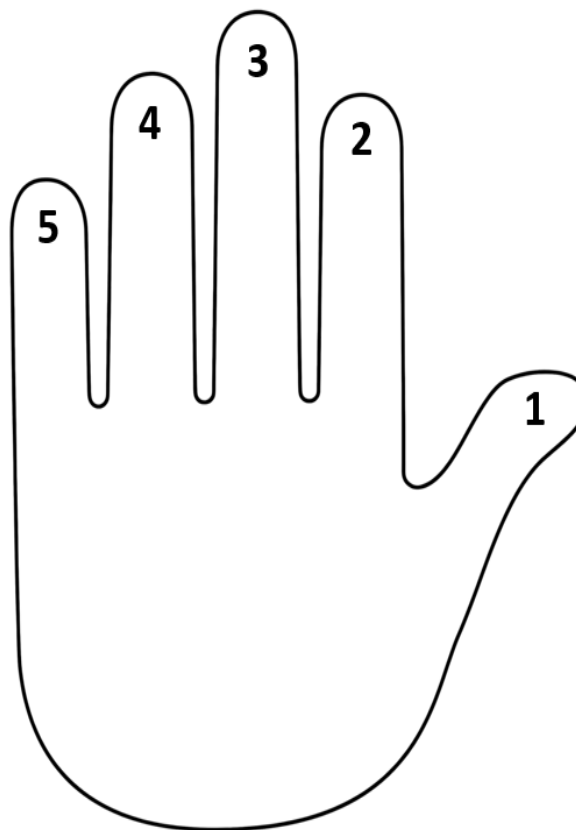


Figure 4: Framework for discourse analysis.

The next phase involved practicing the delivery of students' own monologues, taking into account the strengths and weaknesses identified in the video presenter's performance. Topics were assigned randomly, with one minute allocated for preparation and two minutes for presentation within their groups. While one student was presenting, the others took notes following the suggested framework in order to develop their ability to critically analyze others' discourse. After each presentation, a group discussion was conducted to provide feedback.

### Control Stage: Follow-Up Assessment of Critical Thinking and Argumentation

To evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented set of tasks, students completed a follow-up assessment in which they were required to deliver a monologue on the topic "The Role of Food in Celebrations and Rituals." The monologues were evaluated using the same criteria as in the initial assessment. The objective was to measure the development of argumentative quality and the application of metacognitive strategies in discourse construction.

The individual results demonstrated overall improvement. Out of the 15 participants, 8 reached the high level (students 1, 6, 9, 10, 13, and 14 with 8 points; students 9 and 14 with 9 points), 6 were classified at the intermediate level (students 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 11, and 12 with scores between 5 and 7 points), and only 1 student (student 8) remained at the low level with 4 points.

The follow-up assessment revealed significant improvements in students' argumentative abilities, as 12 out of 15 participants showed progress, increasing their total scores. The number of students at the low level decreased from four in the initial assessment to one in the final assessment, while the number of students at the high level increased substantially, from two to six. At the intermediate level, the average score increased from 6.1 to 6.3 points, indicating consistent improvement in aspects such as the logical structuring of ideas and the use of supporting evidence. The dynamics of this development are illustrated in (Figure 5).

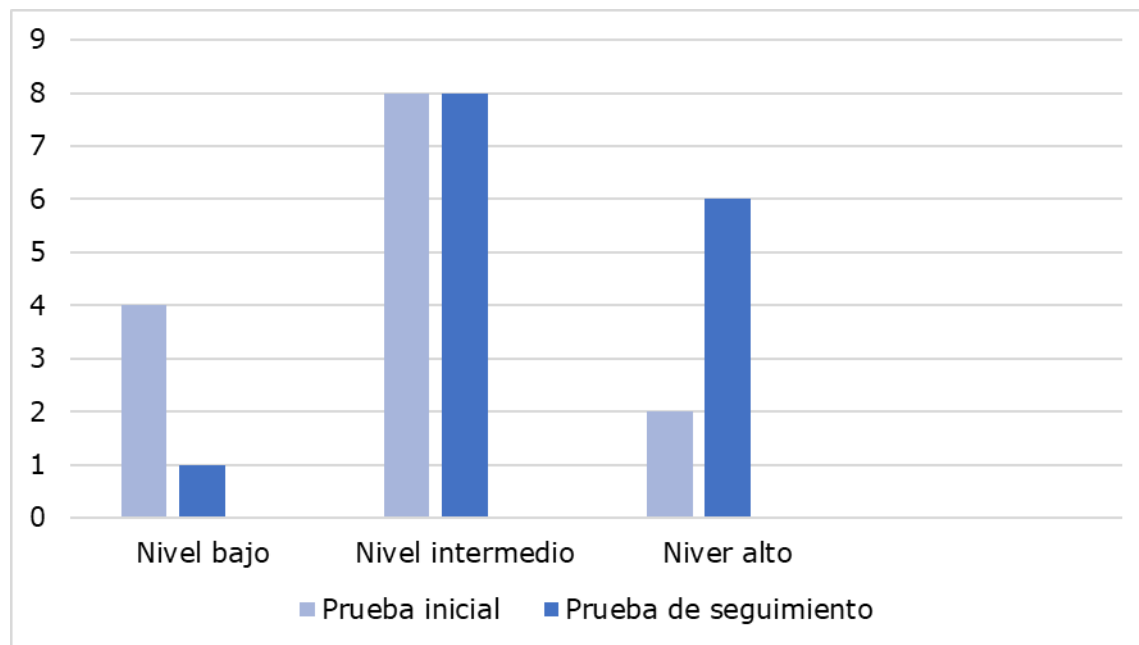


Figure 5: Dynamics in the development of argumentation and critical thinking skills

The comparative analysis of individual results confirmed that most students demonstrated progress. Twelve participants (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15) increased their scores, while three students (2, 8, and 9) maintained their initial results. No regressions were observed in any case.

The analysis of the monologues revealed qualitative changes in argumentative structure. In the initial assessment, students tended to present ideas in isolation, with unsupported statements (e.g., “Food is important because it’s part of culture”) and abrupt or absent conclusions. In the final assessment, a greater tendency was observed to structure arguments according to a logical framework, including the introduction of a thesis (e.g., “I believe food plays a crucial role in celebrations because...”), development supported by concrete examples (e.g., “For instance, in my family, we always prepare...”), and a conclusion that restated the main idea. Furthermore, there was an increased use of logical connectors (e.g., *therefore*, *however*, *for example*) and an emerging ability to anticipate potential counterarguments (e.g., “Although some might argue that...”).

These qualitative changes, together with the quantitative improvement in scores, suggest that the intervention based on metacognitive strategies contributed to students’ awareness of planning, monitoring, and evaluating their own discourse, which resulted in more coherent and well-structured argumentation.

The findings confirm the potential of metacognitive strategies to foster critical thinking and argumentation in Generation Z linguistics students. The initial diagnostic phase revealed that more than half of the students (53%) were at an intermediate level of argumentative skills, with weaknesses in logical structuring, exemplification, and cohesion. These results are consistent with previous studies in EFL contexts that identify counterargument construction and logical organization as the most problematic aspects (Qin & Karabacak, 2010; Wingate, 2012).

These difficulties can be interpreted as manifestations of what the literature defines as “metacognitive gaps,” that is, discrepancies between awareness of the strategies required to construct effective arguments and their actual implementation during discourse production. The fact that B2-level students exhibited these difficulties suggests a cognitive and metacognitive issue rather than a purely linguistic one. The positive correlation between critical thinking and English language performance ( $r = 0.32$ ; Kupriyanov et al., 2023) further supports this interpretation, extending the evidence to spontaneous oral production contexts.

The improvement observed in 80% of participants, reflected in the reduction of the low level from 33% to 7% and the increase of the high level from 13% to 40%, confirms the effectiveness of the approach and aligns with recent research (Pelenkahu et al., 2024; Saadi, 2025).

The qualitative analysis also made it possible to identify the mechanisms underlying each strategy. The Cinquain method activated planning and synthesis processes, requiring students to distill complex ideas before expanding them. Bloom's Daisy promoted higher-order thinking skills, including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, through questions of increasing cognitive complexity (Bloom et al., 1956). The Fishbone Diagram fostered systematic analysis and logical organization, which are core elements of critical thinking (Facione, 1990) and argumentation (Ishikawa, 1986). The "All in My Hands" method activated metacognitive evaluation by encouraging reflection on strengths and weaknesses (Biktagirova et al, 2021), thereby helping to bridge the gap between declarative knowledge and effective application.

These findings support the notion of a "potential convergence" between metacognition, critical thinking, and reflection (Ford & Yore, 2012). The results suggest several pedagogical implications: the need for explicit instruction in argumentation using frameworks such as Toulmin's model or Bloom's taxonomy; the systematic integration of metacognitive strategies, including planning, monitoring, and evaluation; the importance of addressing metacognitive gaps through targeted interventions; and the adaptation of teaching approaches to Generation Z by providing clear and structured frameworks that compensate for fragmented thinking (Kupriyanov et al., 2023).

The study has several limitations that should be acknowledged, including the small sample size ( $n = 15$ ), the absence of a control group, the exclusive focus on oral production, and the lack of longitudinal measurement. Future research should replicate the intervention with larger and more diverse samples, incorporate quasi-experimental designs with control groups, explore the transfer of skills to written production, and conduct longitudinal studies to assess the long-term retention of the developed competencies. Additionally, it would be relevant to investigate the integration of artificial intelligence tools as support for metacognitive processes.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study explored the potential of metacognitive strategies, understood as reflective methods, to develop critical thinking and argumentative skills in Generation Z linguistics students. By integrating theoretical analysis with an empirical classroom-based intervention, the study produced results that confirm the effectiveness of this approach and provide valuable insights for foreign language teaching in contemporary higher education contexts.

At the theoretical level, the study established a fundamental connection between three constructs that are often treated separately: metacognition, critical thinking, and

argumentation. The literature review demonstrated that the pragmatic component of communicative competence, particularly thematic development, coherence, and logical structuring of discourse, forms the foundation for effective argumentation. The difficulties experienced by Generation Z in producing continuous discourse, largely due to fragmented information processing or "clip thinking," are not purely linguistic but reflect what has been described as metacognitive gaps, that is, discrepancies between knowledge of communicative strategies and their effective application.

At the methodological level, a set of tasks based on four metacognitive strategies, namely the Fishbone Diagram, Bloom's Daisy, Cinquain, and "All in My Hands," was designed and implemented. These strategies were aimed at activating planning, monitoring, and evaluation processes in discourse production, as well as higher-order critical thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Each strategy contributed to specific aspects of argumentation, including logical organization, depth of analysis, quality of exemplification, and self-evaluation.

The results confirmed the effectiveness of this approach. Following the intervention, 80% of participants improved their scores in argumentative monologue production, the proportion of students at the low level decreased from 33% to 7%, and the proportion at the high level increased from 13% to 40%. Qualitative analysis revealed substantial improvements in argumentative structure, with students moving from isolated and unsupported statements to well-organized discourse featuring clear thesis statements, supported arguments, and coherent conclusions. Additionally, an increased use of logical connectors and an emerging ability to consider alternative viewpoints were observed.

These findings demonstrate that metacognitive strategies based on structured reflection constitute an effective tool for enhancing critical thinking and argumentation among Generation Z linguistics students. By promoting awareness of discourse construction processes and encouraging self-regulation, these strategies help bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application in real communicative contexts.

The main contribution of this study lies in providing a theoretically grounded and practically applicable model for addressing the challenges of foreign language teaching in the digital generation. Unlike approaches focused solely on linguistic content, this model places higher-order thinking skills at the center of the educational process, responding both to labor market demands, which increasingly value critical thinking and argumentation, and to the cognitive needs of a generation that benefits from clear and structured frameworks for organizing thought.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings suggest the importance of integrating explicit instruction in argumentation into foreign language curricula, incorporating metacognitive strategies as a central component of teaching and learning processes, designing differentiated interventions for students with varying levels of competence, and training educators to identify and address metacognitive gaps.

Despite its limitations, this study provides a foundation for future research aimed at expanding and refining this approach. In particular, further studies should explore the long-term impact of metacognitive strategies, their transferability across different language skills, and their integration with emerging technologies.

In conclusion, approaching foreign language teaching from a metacognitive and critical thinking perspective not only enhances students' argumentative competence but also contributes to the development of more reflective, autonomous, and adaptable professionals capable of meeting the communicative demands of an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

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