High school teachers experience in implementing critical reading: A case of a

Nazarbayev Intellectual school, Kazakhstan

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Abstract

Teaching critical reading is one of the concerns in secondary schools of Kazakhstan. Taking into account that reading is one of the main skills to get relevant and credible information means that critical reading skills are significant to be successful in future career. Teachers are expected by the government and society to develop young generation's critical reading skills.

This study presents the aspects in implementing critical reading at one of the Nazarbayev Intellectual schools. The purpose of the study is to explore teachers' experience in critical reading approach using qualitative interviews, lesson observation and document analysis available in that school. The main research question are focused to find the answers to study teachers' understanding of critical reading, identify their professional challenges and describe their methods in teaching critical reading.

The relevant literature was reviewed to create the framework of the study. The findings of the study exposed that the teachers have different opinions and experiences with critical reading. However, there were expected and unexpected findings, which are significant for giving direction and recommendations for teachers, school administrators, teacher training institutions and policy makers to address critical reading issue.

Key words: critical reading, teachers' experience, professional challenges, methods of teaching

Аңдатпа

Сыни тұрғыда оқу дағдысына үйрету Қазақстан орта мектептерінің түйінді мәселерінің бірі. Қажет етілген және сенімді ақпаратты табудағы оқудың маңызды біліктердің бірі екендігін ескерсек, сыни тұрғыдан оқудың болашақ кәсіби жетістікке жетудегі маңызы зор екендігін байқаймыз. Үкімет пен қоғам тарапынан мұғалімдерден өскелең ұрпақтың сыни оқу дағдыларын дамыту күтілуде.

Бұл зерттеу жұмысында Назарбев зияткерлік мектептерінің біріндегі іске асырылған сыни тұрғыдан оқудың аспектілері баяндалады. Зерттеу жұмысының мақсаты - - сапалық сұхбат алу,   бақылауды қолдана отырып, мектепте қолданыстағы құжаттардың көмегімен мұғалімдердің сыни тұрғыда оқу дағдысы әдістеріне үйрету тәжірибесін зерттеу болып табылады. Негізгі талқыға түсетін зерттеу сұрағы мұғалімдердің сыни тұрғыда оқу жайлы түсінігін зерттеуге, олардың кәсіби қиыншылықтарын айқындауға, сыни тұрғыдағы оқуға үйретудегі әдістерін сипаттауға бағытталған.

Тиісті әдебиет көздері зерттеу жұмысының аясын айқындау мақсатында қарастырылды. Зерттеу жұмысының нәтижелері мұғалімдердің сыни тұрғыда оқу тұрғысында әр түрлі көзқараста екендігін анықтады. Дегенмен, алдын-ала күтілген және күтілмеген нәтижелердің болуы мұғалімдерге,   мектеп әкімшілігіне, мұғалімдерді кәсіби даярлау институттарына маңызды ұсыныстар мен бағыт-бағдар беруге мүмкіндік береді.

Кілт сөздер: сыни тұрғыда ойлау; мұғалімдердің тәжірибесі; кәсіби қиыншылықтар; оқыту әдістері.

Аннотация

Преподавание критического чтения один из вопросов, требующих рассмотрения в практике общеобразовательных школ Казахстана. Принимая во внимание тот факт, что чтение это один из важных языковых навыков для получения релевантной и достоверной информации, означает, что навыки критического чтения существенно влияют на успешность будущей карьеры. Правительство и общество ожидают, что именно учителя будут развивать данные навыки у подрастающего поколения.

Это исследование представляет аспекты внедрения критического чтения в одной из Назарбаев Интеллектуальных школ. Цель исследования: изучить опыт учителей данной школы, в области внедрения критического чтения используя интервью с участниками, посещение уроков и анализ документации. Основные вопросы исследования сфокусированы на том, чтобы определить степень понимания учителями термина «критическое чтение», определить их профессиональные затруднения и описать методы преподавания в данном подходе.

Относящаяся к данному исследованию литература определяет область исследования. Основные результаты исследования показывают разную степень понимания учителями данного вопроса и их различный опыт внедрения критического чтения. Как бы то ни было, в данном исследовании представлены аспекты, определяющие направление дальнейшей работы по внедрению критического чтения и рекомендации для учителей, администрации школ, институтов повышения квалификации и отделов управления образованием.

Ключевые слова: критическое чтение, опыт учителей, профессиональные затруднения, методы преподавания

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Despite the developing technologies more and more people realize the importance of reading as the source of knowledge and information. Moreover, due to PISA results government of Kazakhstan came across the issue of young generation's low level in functional literacy and critical reading skills. What is done in our country to improve the situation? What steps and strategies are implemented to develop critical reading skills? How are the educators prepared to meet the needs of society?

The study is focused on teachers experience in implementing critical reading instruction. The main areas of research are the following: teachers' understanding of critical reading, support they need and receive to be successful in teaching critical reading, the methods and strategies which are used in teaching critical reading. The study was conducted in one of secondary schools in Kazakhstan where this teaching instruction is currently being implemented.

This chapter describes the background of the existing situation in teaching critical reading in Kazakhstan. In addition to that the research states the problem of the study, presents the purpose and research questions regarding teaching critical reading. The design of the study as well as its significance is presented to describe key stages of the research.

1.1 Background of the study

Our world is overloaded with information and critical reading is viewed as one of the most important skills to be successful in the contemporary life. These skills allow us to evaluate the accuracy and validity of information, compare and contrast its' sources, consider different perspectives, and evidence. El-Hindi (1997) and Flavell (1993) emphasize these skills are crucial for receiving and providing information in the modern world. These skills involve a metacognitive aspect that engages the reader in evaluating

the text, forming connections with prior knowledge and experiences, and constructing new knowledge. A number of countries, including Kazakhstan, reform their educational system to increase young generation's level of critical reading as the main function of human literacy ("Funkzionalnaya Gramotnost", 2015).

The analysis of the results of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) conducted in 2012 (OECD, 2013) shows that 15-years old students of Kazakhstan are strong at remembering, recognizing and retrieving information when reading continuous texts. However, they are not able to deal with reflecting and evaluating texts (higher order thinking skills) and to read non-continuous texts like graphs, maps, or tables. The importance of the problem was highlighted in Address of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbayev to the nation, on January 17, 2014. He emphasized that this is important to develop young generation' mastery of critical thinking skills, independent research and in-depth analysis of information (Address of the President of Kazakhstan, 2014). Therefore, there is a need to study what and how was implemented at schools to meet the objective to teach critical reading.

In addition to that, there is a growing interest of the school graduates to gain an opportunity for entering the best universities in the world in order to be employed in the most successful companies worldwide in the future. The majority of world prestigious universities require the results of the following tests: International English Language Testing System (IELTS), Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), and Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT). All these standardized examinations include a reading section, which tests for higher-order thinking and reading skills. Moreover, a new format of the United National Test is supposed to check students' reading skills in identifying the main idea, recognizing detailed specific information and author's attitude. It means that teachers

are expected to develop students' skills in reading texts critically for students to be able to get a high score in a variety of examinations and tests.

Teachers encounter challenges in teaching their students critical reading. There is a question whether they are prepared to teach critical reading effectively. Talking about teachers' professional competence in teaching critical reading, Du Boulay (1999) highlights that current methods of teaching reading as well as assessing and evaluating performance in reading are not relevant or appropriate to the modern students' needs. The effectiveness of teaching critical reading depends on teacher's educational and professional background, which includes their theoretical and practical preparation regarding what and how to teach. As a rule, teachers have to teach despite the lack of experience and resources to build the educational environment to grow their students as critical readers.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The government's call to educators for critical reading skills development is addressed primarily to the Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS). The NIS system includes flagship schools founded to modernize the secondary education in Kazakhstan (the Strategic Plan of the Kazakh Ministry of Education and Science for 2011-2015). These schools were created as innovative educational institutions to accumulate, adapt and integrate the best local and international practices. There was a row of strategic tasks for NIS teachers. They are supposed to build learning environment that helps students to become functionally literate and creative and critical thinkers and readers (Development Strategy, 2013, p. 4). Therefore, NIS teachers are the first educators that are expected by the government to overcome the challenges in teaching critical reading. In addition to that,

they have to share their experience with the education community within the whole country.

Facing the expectations of the government and various stakeholders, such as school administrators, students and parents, the NIS teachers should develop critical reading skills. However, there is no information about the extent to which they are prepared to implement critical reading instruction. Moreover, there is no information about availability of professional development courses aimed to train them to teach critical reading. For instance, the National Center for Professional Development «Orleu» was created to support teachers in the applying new approaches prescribed by the education reform and to address their needs. However, a quick review of the courses which were established by this centre shows that their curriculum does not include critical reading instruction ("Available courses", "Institute of Professional Development", 2017). One of the opportunities for teachers to gain any knowledge about critical reading is team work with international colleagues, who were hired by the Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools to assist with implementation of reforms. Another potential source is teacher's self – study. However, the extent to which any of these are used by teachers is not clear. There is no research on how NIS teachers deal with teaching critical reading. In other words, there is no data of any monitoring procedure to what extent the teachers of Nazarbayev Intellectual school are familiar with critical reading, what kind of support is available for them, and what kind of instructional approach they use to teach their students to be critical readers.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The central phenomenon of the qualitative study was a personal and professional experience of the Nazarbayev Intellectual School (NIS) teachers as critical reading

instructors. The purpose of the study was to explore NIS teachers' understanding of critical reading, their pre-service training background and approaches to implementing critical reading. First, the study revealed some key points to define critical reading in view of others researchers and to compare the definition reviewed in the literature with understanding of teachers. Second, this was an attempt to identify possible difficulties of teachers in implementing critical reading. Finally, the study was a way to investigate and describe the methods which were used to teach critical reading.

1.5   Research questions

The following questions were addressed in the study:

RQ 1: How do teachers understand the concept of critical reading?

RQ 2: What kind of challenges do teachers face in critical reading instruction?

RQ 3: What kind of support is available for teachers in implementing critical reading?

RQ 4: How do teachers teach critical reading? (The methods and strategies which are used by them)

Answering the research questions contributed to study the central phenomenon and to hear the voice of teachers as main critical reading instructors. In this regard, it was possible to gain the first- hand information of their experiences, achievements and challenges for in-depth analysis of implementing critical reading in Kazakhstan.

1.6 Significance of the study

As this study explored NIS teachers' experience in teaching critical reading, and the critical reading practice itself, it brings the possibility to assess the extent of understanding

critical reading by teachers, identify teachers' professional needs implementing critical reading in Kazakhstani context.

First, due to the fact that critical reading approach was described in the literature as practice of different world universities, the experience studied in this case could provide an opportunity for further development and improvement of the critical reading teaching approach for secondary school teachers and administrators. Consequently, this study highlighted what teachers' challenges in critical reading instruction are and how to minimize them in future. Therefore, teachers might get more support in their work, which could be provided by their colleagues and school administrators. In addition to that, the common methods of NIS teachers to develop critical reading skills were selected and described in this study. Therefore, these methods could be used as resource for sharing with mainstream schools teachers within the country.

Second, the findings of this study could be crucial for the centers of professional development such as "Orleu", the Center of Excellence, or the Center of Pedagogical Measurements. The results of the study might be used for reviewing, designing and adapting curriculum for the pre-service courses on critical reading, as well as for planning trainings and workshops to address the needs of educational community in Kazakhstan.

Third, the Ministry of Education and Science could use the results of the study for modifying the secondary and high school curriculum. According to the findings of the study there is a need to include clear explanation of critical reading approach into guideline for educators, as well as list resources recommended by experts to increase the effectiveness of teaching critical reading. Moreover, the text books could be reviewed to change their content for developing young generation as critical readers.

Finally, this study and its findings may contribute to existing literature and international experience in implementing critical reading. The problem stated in this case and experience shown in this study may provide area for further research.

1.3   Conclusion

This first chapter described background information of the need to teach critical reading. The problem of the study was stated and the central phenomenon was defined in accordance with the purpose of the study. The research questions were indicated as well as the significance of the study was discussed and justified.

The remaining part of the thesis includes five chapters. The second chapter is devoted to the literature review of the existing studies with the aim to define the central term, identify the issues of the educators and list the common methods and strategies in the field of teaching critical reading. The third chapter focuses on the study design, showing the methodological approach, the description of the research site, sampling of participants, selecting procedures, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis, possible limitations and ethical considerations. Two subsequent chapters present the major findings and discussions of the conducted study considering research questions and their relation to the relevant literature. And the final Chapter 7 draws the conclusions of the whole study and provides the overview and recommendations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The previous chapter presented the central phenomenon, the purpose of the study and background information. This section offers a review of the relevant literature that was studied to explore the central phenomenon of the study. The purpose of this section is to create a conceptual framework to examine research questions and to analyze existing body of literature on teachers' perspectives and practices used in teaching critical reading.

This chapter is divided into three sections. They include definition of critical reading and teachers' understanding of the term. Teachers' experience regarding implementation of critical reading is reviewed from the previous studies. In addition to that, common methods to teach critical reading used by educators are described in this chapter. As a result, the analysis of the relevant literature provides a theoretical basis for further research, as well as identifies the main methodological features and gaps in the conducted studies.

2.1 Defining critical reading

This section presents different perspectives in understanding of the term "critical reading". There is no agreement what critical reading is, as well as no clear common definition of the term in the related literature. However, defining critical reading is vital for this study because one of the research questions is based on teachers' understanding regarding this term.

The studied literature contains a number of definitions of critical reading. Thus, El-Hindi (1997) presents critical reading as a meta-cognitive process in which the reader interacts with texts, asks questions, makes predictions, makes connections via prior knowledge and experiences, breaks down prejudices, perceives hidden meanings and builds new knowledge (p. 15). Summarizing these peculiarities Paul & Elder (2008) claim

that critical reading is the art of analyzing and evaluating text and thinking with the aim of improving the nature of thought. On the other hand, McDonald (2004) defines critical reading as an alternative way of reading that goes beyond the "typical approaches to reading such as information processing or personal response" (p. 18). This explanation could be confusing because, one of these "typical approaches to reading" (McDonald, 2004), particularly, a personal response could be considered as an aspect of critical reading. The personal response is meant by him as the description of own emotions, feelings or impressions to the read information. It means reflecting on the text and could be included into analyzing and evaluating of the text. Therefore, it is difficult to select the most appropriate notion.

As could be seen from the previous paragraph, there is a variety of definitions of critical reading. Nevertheless, it was possible to highlight common features of critical reading considering experts' different visions. Firstly, critical reading is an active, intellectual process which is based on reader's background knowledge. Secondly, critical reading requires high order thinking skills: comparing own opinion with the author's point of view, reading between the lines understanding implied meaning, evaluating information in the text. Therefore, critical reading is an analytic and reflective process of selecting, analyzing, evaluating information from different perspectives and for different purposes.

A critical reader is expected to have several key skills. Meyers & Jones (1993) describe the most common critical reader's abilities dividing them into six categories 1) identification of problem or issue of the text, 2) making connections, 3) interpretation of evidence, 4) challenging assumptions, 5) making applications, and (6) taking a different point-of-view. It means that a reader has to answer essential questions, identify relevant information from the text for further interpretation. This activity includes searching for key ideas and arguments, how they are supported and proved by the author. In addition to that,

Tomasek (2009) highlights the idea that a good reader connects his past experiences with the text: interpreting, evaluating, and considering alternative responses or interpretations (p 127). Because the key skills involve in critical reading include the ability to analyze, to synthesize and to evaluate information, we can clearly make a connection between these skills and the high order thinking skills in terms of the Bloom's Taxonomy.

On the other hand, some authors believe that students should have basic reading skills before they will be taught critical reading. For instance, they should be able to identify main idea and have enough experience to use information from the text independently and purposefully. Kozen, at al. (2006) highlighted teaching critical reading relies on students' ability to read for meaning and understanding. It means that teachers expect that students are competent in finding the evidence in the text to complete the tasks and answering high-order thinking questions. Moreover, students are expected to interpret the information they get according to the particular learning objectives set by curriculum.

2.2 Teachers' understanding of critical reading

Due to absence of an agreement on the definition of critical reading among researchers, it is obvious that teachers might have different understanding of critical reading. The results to prove that fact were introduced by Wilson (2016) based on her case studies with the main purpose to find what teachers define as critical reading. Wilson (2016) indicates that teachers understood critical reading in different ways. For instance, some of the participants describe critical reading in the relation with critical thinking. More specifically, they planed reading tasks for comparing/contrasting, arguing for and against, identifying main ideas and summarizing key points, evaluating contrasting positions, and drawing inferences (Wilson, 2016). It means that the teachers trained their

students' reading skills in terms of applying their high order thinking skills regarding Bloom's Taxonomy.

The study conducted by Bosley (2008) investigates the key questions related to critical reading instruction, with the focus on two research questions what critical reading is and how it is taught. The researcher interviewed seven university language instructors asking them open-ended questions about their professional background and current practice in implementing critical reading. The findings present the fact that the majority of teachers interpret the term "critical reading" from the different perspectives and viewpoints. The participants operate with a number of components to define critical reading. They included: identifying the main idea of the text, reading between the lines, making own meaning, recognizing author's bias, making connections to own experience, applying information to other situations, analyzing and evaluating the text (Bosley, 2008).

According to the results of the studies conducted by Bosley (2008) and Wilson (2016) it was identified that teachers' understanding of critical reading differs. For instance, while defining critical reading the most of the respondents have used different words and terms. Moreover, they were not confident in their ability to describe the complex process of reading texts critically. The findings of Wilson's (2016) research evoke the idea of the connection of teachers' understanding of the concept of critical reading and the methods used by them.

2.3 Teachers' preparation for implementing critical reading

Some of the experts as Allen (2004) and Nilson (2003) emphasize those critical reading skills are not only developed by teachers. Individuals may learn the skills independently throughout their lives. However, it is clear that teachers play a significant role in training their students to become critical readers.

One of the research questions of this study focuses on what kind of support is available for teachers to implement critical reading. First of all, this means what kind of theoretical and practical preparation can teachers get to teach critical reading. In the reviewed literature, it was hard to find any relevant information about this aspect of teachers' professional training. Many , such as researchers Du Boulay (1999), Albeckay (2014), Hall and Piazza (2008), Karabay et al (2015), who studied critical reading implementation, focus their work on methods of teaching critical reading rather than on exploring teachers' professional background.

Nevertheless, one of these authors Albeckay (2014) pointed to the lack of teachers' training for implementing critical reading. Albeckay indicated in their study that as a rule teachers were not formally taught and did not study critical reading. Formally. Despite the lack of formal training, teachers showed that they actually engage in critical reading instruction without much awareness of the concept of a critical reading. The researcher explained this finding by the fact that that many of the participants had received graduate education in Great Britain and the United States of America, where critical reading is emphasized during graduate education (p 180). Albeckay (2014) also recommended some practices which may substitute pre-service training in critical reading instruction. The practices include fieldwork, training sessions, seminars, workshops to pay special attention towards critical reading and thinking skills. These practices nay provide opportunities for teachers to develop their professionalism in critical reading instruction after they start their professional activity at schools.

In addition, the study conducted by Karadağ (2014) aimed to explore school teachers' views towards critical reading skills and their perceptions of competence to teach it. The qualitative research was conducted to collect data via semi-structured interviews with the primary school teacher candidates. The results highlighted that participants did

not consider themselves critically literate and they were not aware of critical reading strategies. (Karadağ, 2014).

While no studies were conducted specifically on teacher preparation to teaching critical reading, some prior studies indicated the lack of such preparation. Thus, the reason of teachers' misunderstanding of critical reading which was described in the previous section might be a result of lack of specialized preparation.

2.4 Methods of teaching critical reading

This section of the study shows common ways used by teachers to develop students' critical reading abilities and skills. There are numbers of studies conducted by Langer (1994, 1995), Marshall and Rowland (2006), Harvey and Goudvis (2007), Nation (2009) and Wilson (2016) showing how educators try to find, adapt or create methods and strategies for reading critically.

Langer (1990) presents critical reading as a dynamic process, since a student's final understanding of a text is "subject to change with time, as a result of conversations with others, the reading of other works, pondering and reflection" (p. 812). It refers to Nation's idea (2009) that effective reading should be developed through the principles which are focused on gaining and integrating a number of reading strategies such as: "previewing, setting a purpose, predicting, posing questions, connecting to background knowledge, paying attention to text structure, guessing words from context, critiquing, and reflecting on the text" (p.7).

Kolb (2001), Harvey and Goudvis (2007), and Langer (1994, 1995) works stress the importance of three stages in the process of instruction focusing on critical reading: the pre-reading, while - reading, and post-reading stages. Generally, these stages are common

for teaching reading. However, these are the mile stones to develop essential students'

skills to work with the text.

At the first stage of pre-reading teachers use different strategies to activate students'

background knowledge and experience of the topic. This approach includes previewing,

predicting, and creating a reading plan. Students are suggested to take time for skimming

titles, headings and subheadings, information about authors, summaries and conclusions,

studying visual aids like pictures, graphs and tables. This short inventory helps them to

link collected information to the background knowledge.

At the next while – reading stage students should investigate the text itself. Langer

(1990) describes the process through which students elicit meaning from a text going

"beyond the information given . . . by asking questions, making hypotheses, seeking

evidence, and validating assumptions" (p. 815). It requires reader's abilities to highlight

evidence, examine arguments and supported facts presented in the text, analyzing the text

according to the author's purpose and attitude to the topic, style and format of writing. In

addition to that, the following critical reading strategy is suggested by Tovani (2000) to

help the reading process. He recommends marking the text while you read using the

system of symbols. Marking as well as note taking may be beneficial for students to

achieve learning goals and to complete reading tasks successfully. According to Axelrod,

Cooper, and Warriner (2002), Peirce (2006) and Linkon (2008) the basic critical reading

strategies include annotating which means circling key words and writing comments or

questions about the material in the margins and contextualizing requires putting a text

within its original historical or cultural context. This strategy helps to make connections

between the text and reader's personal experience and knowledge, to monitor

comprehension of the text and summarize the key points.

At the post-reading stage teachers prefer to ask for summarizing the information read in the text; different strategies to build new knowledge or develop own view. Strategies may include the use of tables, charts, templates to fill in.

Teaching critical reading gained popularity and was studied as part of pre-service training at universities in Singapore, the US, and Turkey by Bosley (2008), Macknish (2011), and Karabay et al. (2015). Adding to discussion of methods used to teach critical reading, Wilson (2016) describes three models of teaching critical reading (Table 1). The findings of the study have evidence that these methods and strategies might be different but effective for particular purpose addressing particular student's needs.

Table 1

Three models of teaching critical reading

Approach\ methods	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Teacher's role	Authoritative, controlling , pushing students to be well-organized	Managing, facilitating, observing	Supporting, Managing
Student's role	Passive, to do every tasks	Active, setting and achieving own goals	Passive
Thinking skills	comparing/contrasting, arguing for and against, identifying main ideas	identifying main ideas and summarizing key points	identify main ideas, evaluate contrasting positions, and draw inferences, modeling the application of critical thinking

			skills
Reading strategies	Selected by teacher according to his view point of their value	Close, addressing to the students' educational needs Explanation/ discussion why they were chosen	For deep understanding
Form of work	Whole-class or individual work	A good balance of whole- class, group, pair and individual work	More individual work
Resources	A big number of hand outs, useful but time-consuming	A number of hand outs, flexible use according to students needs	A limited number of text books
Classroom atmosphere	Controlled Freedom is limited Students' voice is not accepted	Collaborative Friendly Freedom is guided Students' voice is accepted	Rather boring for students

Source: created by the author.

As it is shown in Table 1, the researcher observed the lessons focusing on everyone's role, high order thinking skills, as well as methods of teaching critical reading, used resources and classroom management.

One of the approaches to teach critical reading, which is recommended by many authors is scaffolding. The idea of scaffolding refers to the ideas of scientists like Vygotsky (1978), Hammond & Gibbons (2005), Lantolf and Thorne (2006). They describe the scaffolding as appropriate support to address students' needs in the form of teacher – student and student-student interaction, and encouragement in the form of challenging tasks. Developing this aspect, Wilson (20016) presents the approach of "delicate scaffolding". Delicate scaffolding gives teachers an opportunity to provide students with the type of support (the roles of teacher and student, resources, form of work and educational atmosphere) they need in natural way. It is seen that teachers use different ways of developing students' thinking skills. Moreover, they use reading strategies to give students a variety of tools to read for different purposes.

Generally, there are specific methods to teach critical reading that are described in the relevant literature. Nevertheless, teachers create, adapt and integrate common strategies to study the text from different perspectives. The combination of reading strategies gives the readers more confidence and they are able to control their reading experience.

2.5 Summary

In this chapter the available literature on critical reading was reviewed. There were four main themes presented to cover the research questions. They were defining critical reading, teachers' understanding of critical reading, teachers' preparation for implementing critical reading and methods of teaching critical reading.

Reviewed literature on critical reading demonstrated some confusion in defining the studied notion and left the research question about teachers' understanding of critical reading partially answered. The chapter provided some evidence that there is lack of special courses or pre-service trainings on critical reading. However, it was possible to identify a range of methods used by educators to teach critical reading.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The previous chapter was aimed to present existing literature to review the key features of critical reading and address research questions. Taking into consideration that the purpose of the study is to explore how well teachers are prepared to develop their students' critical reading skills, the research design is to answer the following questions: 1) How do teachers understand the concept of critical reading? 2) What kind of challenges do teachers face teaching critical reading? 3) What kind of support do teachers receive in critical reading instruction? 4) How do they teach critical reading?

This section presents a description of the methods selected for this study to answer the research questions. Generally, the purpose of this chapter is to explain the research design, to explain the site selection as well as sampling procedures, to identify data collection methods. In addition, the data analysis methods and limitation are discussed to consider possible strengths and weaknesses of the study, as well as any ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

A qualitative approach was used in order to achieve the purpose of this study. As the central phenomenon of the study was teachers' experience in implementation of critical reading, the qualitative approach gave participants an opportunity to express their own perception of the issue. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998) "qualitative methods can be used to obtain the intricate details about phenomena such as feelings, thought processes, and emotions that are difficult to extract or learn about through more conventional methods" (p. 11).

In addition to that, case study design is used when a comprehensive understanding of the settings and the central phenomenon is necessary. According to Cohen, Manion, and

Morrison (2013) a case study provides a unique example of real individuals in real situations, enabling people to understand ideas more clearly (2013, 253). The researcher planned to describe in detail how teachers in one of the Nazarbayev Intellectual schools interpret the concept of critical reading, how they teach it and how they are supported in their everyday practice. Hence, a case study design was chosen as most appropriate. Yin (2003) recommends the case study when the purpose of the study is to answer "how" questions. More specifically, a single-case design was used to determine what kind of experience teachers get as they implement the novel critical reading instruction in Kazakhstan. In the literature a single-case study is described as a way to investigate a phenomenon in depth, enabling a rich description (Cavaye, 1996, 236). Moreover, it was a single typical case because the researcher concentrated attention on exploring the central phenomenon in one particular school, which a typical school in Nazarbayev Intellectual school system.

3.2 Data collection methods

There were three methods of data collection in the research, as was expected in a case study design. These three methods of data collection were used to achieve data triangulation. According to Creswell (2014) the process of triangulation ensures the accuracy of the study because the information is drawn from multiple sources of information, individuals, or processes (p 283). The design of the study included qualitative one-on-one interviews with two groups of participants, lesson observations and document analysis.

Qualitative one-on-one semi-structured interviews were planned for the study to find the answers to the research questions. This type of interview was convenient for the researcher and participants. First, one-on-one interview allowed the participants fully

express their opinion related to the interview questions. Second, the semi-structured interview gave an opportunity to ask additional questions if it was a need to clarify some of the participants' thoughts and views. Moreover, this type of interview was used to have freedom and flexibility to elicit appropriate answers to the research questions.

The first set of the interviews was conducted with teachers to explore their understanding of critical reading, their background in professional preparation for teaching critical reading and strategies they use in actual teaching of critical reading skills. The second set of the interviews was conducted with school leadership to get the answers on training and support available for teachers in critical reading instruction.

To study the critical reading issue from different perspectives, participants' lesson observations were conducted in addition to the interviews for deeper understanding of the central phenomenon. According to Creswell (2014) observation entails collection of firsthand information by collecting data of people's activity at a research site (p 213). The process was observed from a distance paying attention to the teacher's instruction during the lesson. The researcher played the role of a nonparticipant observer because the goal was to describe the process of implementing critical reading instruction without intervention into teaching

Documents were the next additional source to get the answers to the research questions. The document analysis allowed answering the research question about support, which is available to teachers. More specifically, the researcher looked for particular information whether critical reading is presented in the curriculum, there are any resources recommended to teach critical reading, and what kind of the resources are recommended to use. Yin (2009) recommends using documentary information which is likely to be relevant to every case study topic (p.101). In this case, Subject Programme, Course Plans (English, Grades 11 and 12, Global Perspectives), English teacher Guide, lesson plans of

participants were selected as documents with the purpose to look for the information regarding support for teaching critical reading.

3.3 Research site

To answer the essential questions of the study the researcher selected Nazarbayev Intellectual school in Karaganda as a site and a case for research. This is one of the typical schools which are situated in regions. The choice of the case/site is not accidental. Firstly, the school has been implementing critical reading instruction for three years as a task to prepare students for their further education at universities. Secondly, the researcher had easy access to this site as a member of the academic staff.

3.4 Data collection instruments

The researcher used three methods of data collection in the case study. However, two data collection instruments were designed: semi –structured interview protocols and lesson observation protocols. No documents collection protocols were used for document analysis because the researcher planned to work with particular type of the documents.

1. Interview protocols

The interview protocols included interview information (date, time, and place), general instructions, and questions for participants and space for researcher to take notes. Each interview protocol (Appendices B and C) contained 10-12 open-ended questions to encourage participants to reflect on their teaching and managing practice. The questions were relating to the research questions and the literature review section. According to the research questions they were united into three categories: 1) questions about the participants' understanding of the critical reading concept; 2) questions which might help to find out what is teachers' professional background in implementing critical reading

instruction is and what kind of support they need and receive; 3) questions to make a list of

common strategies that are used by teachers at the classroom and school level.   The copies

of the protocols are included in Appendix B and C.

2.   Observation protocol

An Observation protocol (Appendix D) was designed by the researcher to collect

additional information related to RQ 3. The form of the observation protocol included the

details of the observation procedure as well as space for descriptive and reflective notes.

Descriptive field notes were recorded on such information as details of strategies and

methods used in the classroom to develop students' critical reading skills. Reflective field

notes were used to write the researcher's personal thoughts and comments that relate to

their insights or broad ideas or themes that emerge during the observation Creswell (2014,

p 239).

3.5 Sampling Procedures

The population in the study included 10 participants. There were two types of

participants: seven teachers and three vice principals were invited to the two sets of

interviews. The first set of the interviews were conducted with teachers to explore their

understanding of critical reading, their background in professional preparation for teaching

critical reading and strategies they use in actual teaching of critical reading skills. In

addition, the researcher observed four lessons conducted by two teachers from the same

group of participants. The second set of the interviews was conducted with school

leadership to get the answers on training and support available for teachers in critical

reading instruction at this particular typical Nazarbayev Intellectual School. The researcher

invited three vice principals who are responsible for students' academic achievements,

teachers' professional development and implementing innovative instruction including

critical reading. They were selected to study and describe their perspectives on implementation of critical reading for deeper understanding of the central phenomenon.

The purposeful sampling was used to invite ten participants to the study. More specifically, the homogeneous sampling strategy was used for both sets of the interviews: with teachers and vice principals, and lesson observation. Creswell (2012) refers to the idea of using this procedure, as the way to identify the characteristics and find individuals or sites that possess them (p 228). The common characteristics for teachers who were interviewed and observed were 1) they are working with the same grade of students who are taught critical reading; 2) all of them develop students critical reading skills according to the subject course plan; 3) their subjects are taught in English which is not native language for students.

The purpose of the interviews with school leadership team was to get three school leaders' perspective to analyze how critical reading is implemented, and how teachers are supported at the school level. The common characteristics for school administrators were 1) their functions include management of the implementation of critical reading instruction; 2) their responsibilities include organization of teachers' professional development on how to implement critical reading.

In addition to the interviews and lesson observations, the following guidelines to select and collect documents for further analysis were kept according to Creswell (2014) recommendation. The researcher collected documents using purposeful sampling. The main criterion in selecting them was that the documents should contain information about purposes and procedures to implement critical reading instruction. Yin (2009) recommends using documentary information which is likely to be relevant to every case study topic (p.101). Specifically, the following type of the documents were identified as relevant to answer the research questions 2 and 3 a) the Subject Programme; b) The Course Plan; c)

the English Teacher Guide; d) short term plans. The potential documents to be analyzed are freely available at the http://cep-forum.nis.edu.kz and at the school server.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

The study was conducted according to ethical principles and standards. After receiving the approval of the GSE Ethical Review Committee, a permission to conduct the study from the gatekeeper of the site, in this case, a Nazarbayev Intellectual school principal was gained. The researcher negotiated with a gatekeeper all the key stages of the study, including sampling, interview procedure and a duration of study in a written form via support letter from Nazarbayev University and in a formal conversation.

The data collection procedures were started in January and ended in March 2017. Generally, the process was conducted in the following steps. In the first part of the study two groups of participants: teachers and school leadership were interviewed. The second part of the study included lesson observation.

3.6.1 Interview Procedure

First, the list of teachers, who are working at senior grades and are supposed to teach critical reading according to their subject curriculum, was given to the researcher. Having analyzed and selected individuals who matched the criteria, seven teachers were identified to take part in the qualitative One-on-One interview. The invitations to these potential participants were sent via e-mails. All participants agreed to participate on voluntary basis. Having received their agreement, the informed consent form (Appendix A) was sent to each participant. All the detailed explanation of the study was presented to the participants, including the brief description of the study, risks and benefits, as well as participants' rights.

The interview schedule was developed and discussed with the participants. They were informed about the interview one week before via a phone call or face-to-face conversation. Every participant was asked about the most convenient time and place for him/her to conduct the interview. The participants were reminded about the interview a day before via a phone call or face-to-face conversation.

Before starting the interview participants were provided with a hard copy of the informed consent form (Appendix A) and asked about permission to record the interview via audio - taping. Average duration of the interview was about an hour. An interview protocol was designed according to Creswell's recommendation (2014, p. 247) and contained instructions for the interview procedure, the open-ended questions to be asked as well as space for the note taking. With the participants' consent the interviews were audio taped. Moreover, notes were taken while interviewing the participants. The interviews were conducted in English, because the topic of critical reading was familiar to the teachers according to their educational and professional experience and majority of the terms were easier for the participants to explain in this language. At the end of the interview the participants were asked about the possibility for member – checking procedure and the gratitude for their contribution to the study was expressed.

3.6.2 Observation Procedure

Two potential participants: one English teacher and one Global perspective teacher were invited using purposeful homogenous sampling via an email, which included an electronic version of the informed consent form. The researcher discussed with the participants the date and schedule of the lesson observation. Both of the teachers were informed about their rights during their participation in the study. In addition to that,

lesson observation was conducted as a routine school practice without drawing any attention to the participants.

The researcher played the role of a nonparticipant observer because the goal was to describe the process of implementing critical reading instruction without intervention into teaching. It was decided to watch the process from the distance having an opportunity to observe it in real context paying attention to the teacher's instruction during the lessons. During observing a protocol (Appendix D) was used to keep descriptive and reflective field notes about participant's activities, instructions and tasks which refer to critical reading. In addition reflective field notes were kept as personal notes of the observer to set some questions, interpret some events and broaden the ideas (Creswell, 2014, p 217).

3.7 Data analysis methods

Data analysis was described in this section. It was based on an inductive, constant comparative method (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996): through an initial reading of the interview transcripts and studying observation protocols and related to the study documents.

After conducting the interviews, they were transcribed. The transcripts and the notes were shown to the interviewees for a member checking. This member checking provided an additional layer of detail to the data (Patton, 2002). Afterwards, the transcribed notes were read to define the key ideas as Creswell recommends, using the words of the participants to form categories (Creswell, 2012). Color marking was used to highlight the main aspects which related to the research questions. Blue color was selected for teachers' definition and explanation how they understand critical reading. Their challenges to teach critical reading were highlighted in yellow. The passages related to support that is available to teachers and methods teachers use in their teaching practice to develop their

students' critical reading skills were colored with red and green. The coloring technique was useful for identifying the main categories and coding the information to be used in the research discussions and findings. After completing the analysis, the audio tapes and the notes were destroyed.

During lesson observation the descriptive and reflective field notes were kept using observation protocol (Appendix B). Afterwards, these notes were analyzed to answer the research question how critical reading is taught. More specifically, the methods of teaching critical reading were highlighted to compare with the relevant section in the literature review.

To get additional information what kind of the support teachers might get from curriculum, documents analysis protocol was created. The protocol contained descriptive and reflective notes. These notes were kept to identify whether critical reading approach is presented in the curriculum. As well as, to find out what kind of methods to teach critical reading are described in the curriculum. In addition to that, the researcher tried to recognize what kind of resources, how many of them are recommended in curriculum to address teachers' needs and to support their teaching critical reading.

3.8 Ethical issues

This section introduces the potential risks and process to minimize them by ensuring participants' personal and professional safety. Because of the use personal experience of participants, the researcher provided a description of research actions taken to comply with the internal Ethics Approval review by NUGSE research committee. All the key stages of the study were negotiated with a gatekeeper, including sampling, interview procedure and a duration of study in formal conversation with the school principal.

To meet ethical principles and standards, the participants were treated with an ethics of respect and trust. The participants were invited to the research procedure as volunteers.

The purpose and the process of the study were transparent and described in the informed consent form, the interview and observational protocol. The informed consent form (Appendix A) was sent to the potential participants before the study started as well as the purpose and process of the study were explained to the participants to increase their feeling of trust. The participants were informed about their rights to withdraw from the study at any time without explaining their reasons and to refuse answering the interview questions which are confusing or not comfortable for them. The interviews were recorded after the participant's permission.

The minor risk for the participants, which could be expected, was the case that the names of participants might be found out. This situation could lead to some possible negative reaction and actions from school administrators towards participants' openness while interviews. During the whole study, the participants' personal information was protected by ensuring confidentiality to avoid and minimize any risk. No real names or information of people and places were revealed in the research papers while collecting, analyzing and reporting the data. The participants were represented by pseudonyms in all documents.

To minimize the risk of revealing the names of the participants, meetings for the interview were conducted some convenient quiet places at the school, like the relaxation room, not to draw any attention to the purpose of conversation to other colleagues and to keep the participation confidential.

Despite the risks, there were also some benefits for the participants. First, the participants had an opportunity to reflect on the own practice addressing critical reading issue during the interview. Moreover, through this reflection the participants helped to identify professional challenges and gaps in the studied field as well as to find the solutions to minimize them. By informing the study in these ways, they increased the like

hood of improving their experiences by stimulating positive changes. In addition to that, the interview questions allowed to discuss the effectiveness of methods to develop critical reading skills, which were used by the participants, which the participants might have found useful in reflecting on their own teaching approaches.

Lesson observation within the conducted study did not present any significant risks for the participants. This method of evaluating and supporting professional development of teachers is professional learning culture and one of the everyday procedures at the typical Nazarbayev Intellectual School.

The collected data were stored on the researcher's personal computer as protected files and in the locked secure place. While data analysis process only two people: the researcher and the supervisor had access to the study soft and hard copies. After completing the study all the data were deleted.

3.9 Limitations

The research approach described above has several limitations. The first limitation is related to the site selection. Having one typical Nazarbayev Intellectual school as a research site, the data collected during the study could not be used to generalize to other secondary schools' teachers' experience in implementing critical reading. The results are generalizable only to the extent the school was a representative of other NIS Schools. As an illustration, the teachers at this research site could be more trained and did not have the same professional challenges in comparison to other schools. There was also a possibility that, for instance, the issue of critical reading that concerned teachers in this particular school could not be the case for the teachers in different regions of the country.

The second limitation of the present study was the non-representativeness of the sample. The study sample was limited to the teachers of English and Global perspectives.

This study reflects only these teachers' perspectives of the influences on their experience

in implementing critical reading. Including other teachers of different subjects into the

sample would give a broader and richer picture of the study.

Chapter 4: Findings

The findings of the study are presented in this chapter with the focus on teachers' experience in implementing critical reading at Nazarbayev Intellectual schools. The purpose of the study was to explore teachers' understanding of critical reading, their background and implementing critical reading using interviews, observations and document analysis.

The following research questions were set in the introduction to the study: How do teachers understand the concept of critical reading? What kind of challenges do teachers face in critical reading instruction? What kind of support is available for them? How do teachers teach critical reading? To figure out the key stones of teachers' experience in implementing critical reading the qualitative research design was used.

The results of the analysis of collected data of individual interviews, lesson observations and document analysis are presented in this chapter.

This chapter is divided into five main sections lined up with the research questions. The first part describes characteristics of participants. The second part is devoted to exploring teachers' definition of critical reading. This part helped to compare the literature review related to the issue of teachers' understanding with the real situation at the research site in the Discussion section. Teachers' challenges in implementing critical reading approach are depicted in section number three. The last two sections address the support that is available for teachers and participants' practice as critical reading instructors.

4.1 Characteristics of Participants

This section introduces the characteristics of participants who took part in the interviews and agreed to participate in lesson observation. The information about

participants is presented in Table 1. The names shown in the table were used in the study

instead of the real names of respondents to keep their confidentiality.

Overall, there were ten participants in this study: seven teachers of senior grades and

three representatives of the management team. As it is shown in Table 1 these were

teachers of English and Global Perspectives, who were selected according to several

common characteristics. They teach the same grade of students. All of them develop

students' critical reading skills according to the subject course plan. The subjects are

taught in English which is not a native language for students.

The purpose of the interviews with school leadership team was to get their

perspective to analyze how critical reading is implemented, and how teachers are

supported at the school level. The school administrators share the following common

characteristics. One of their job responsibilities is to manage implementation of critical

reading instruction. Another responsibility is professional development of teachers to

implement critical reading.

Table 2

Characteristics of Participants

Name	Gender	Subject	Position	Years of teaching experience
Anna	Female	English	Teacher of senior grade	4
Yekaterina	Female	English	Teacher of senior grade	8

Amina	Female	English	Teacher of senior grade	8
Erdos	Male	English\ Global Perspectives	Teacher of senior grade	2
Aigul	Female	English\ Global Perspectives	Teacher of senior grade	10
Diana	Female	Global Perspectives	Teacher of senior grade	5
Julia	Female	English	Teacher of senior grade	3
Dina	Female	Global Perspectives	Trilingual coordinator	5
Maria	Female	Chemistry	Vice –principle	7
Timur	Male	Maths	Vice –principle	5

Source: created by the author.

As it could be seen from Table 2 the average amount of teaching years is about 5.7.

Also, eight out of ten participants are female teachers. The main subjects taught by

participants are English and Global Perspectives.

4.2 RQ 1: How do teachers understand the concept of critical reading?

This section demonstrates participants' understanding of critical reading. To answer

the research question about the extent of teachers' understanding of critical reading only

interview data were used. During the interview the teachers were asked to define critical

reading with their own words answering the interview questions.

4.2.1 The majority of teachers consider critical reading in relation to critical thinking

One of the main findings of the study was that the way teachers understand critical

reading was very consistent with the way which was described in the Literature Review

section. The majority of participants consider critical reading in the relationship to critical

thinking. Some of the participants linked critical reading to critical thinking directly.

"Critical reading is the ability to think critically, to analyze finding the purpose of the text,

making analogies, comparing things, drawing conclusions out of the text" (Julia). Based on

the literature teachers across the world often define critical reading in terms of the Bloom's

Taxonomy. More specifically, they use the words from the upper three levels of the

taxonomy pertaining to analysis, synthesis and evaluation to describe both critical thinking

and critical reading abilities. In case of Kazakhstan, teachers also interpret critical reading

using the Bloom's Taxonomy. This conclusion was made collecting all the words used by

participants in defining critical reading. These words are presented in Table 3. As you can

see from Table 3 all of the words represent the top three levels of the taxonomy associating

with analysis, synthesis and evaluation. The numbers in brackets in Table 3 show how

many participants out of ten used these words to define critical reading.

Table 3

Terms/ Key Words in Teachers' Definitions of Critical Reading

Bloom's Taxonomy level	Terms\ key words	Total

Analysis	compare things (4), illustrate (2), analyze (3), classify (2), predict (2), interpret (1)	14
Synthesis	generate ideas (2), combine (2), integrate (1), develop (3), summarize (2)	7
Evaluation	judge (1), justify (2), assess\evaluate (3), explain (1), draw the conclusion (1), contrast (1), select/ choose (4)	13
Total		34

Source: created by the author.

Specifically, fourteen words were representing the Bloom's Taxonomy's level of analysis. Seven words are associated with the level of synthesis, and thirteen words refer to the level of evaluation. In total thirty- four words were used by participants from the Bloom's Taxonomy. However, even though teachers understand critical reading as distinct from critical thinking skills, it is not clear which of the aspects of Bloom's Taxonomy they emphasize as important for critical reading.

4.2.2. There is no common understanding of critical reading

In the literature it was found that in many countries when critical reading reforms are implemented, teachers tend to not agree when defining critical reading. Similarly, in Kazakhstan teachers have no agreement in defining critical reading. Some of the participants understand critical reading as self – reflection. For instance, "I consider critical reading as a possibility to compare the author's view to your own background and experience" (Aigul). Other people understand critical reading as a kind of recognizing and seeing what the author wants to see, or inferences or implications might be finding while

reading. "Any time we read, we should ask a set of questions to explore and go beyond the lines to discover unexpected points" (Dina).

It is hard to talk about common understanding of critical reading. Generally, teachers in Kazakhstan understand critical reading in terms of Bloom's Taxonomy level. It means that their understanding of critical reading influence their choice of methods to teach critical reading. Next section will describe the barriers teachers face in implementing critical reading.

4.3 RQ 2: What kind of challenges do teachers face in critical reading instruction?

In order to answer this research question the researcher used interview data from the interviews with teachers. Specifically, seven English and Global Perspectives teachers took part in this the study to answer open- ended questions. They were asked three questions to clarify what kind of challenges in teaching critical reading they face, what the sources of difficulties are, how they overcome these challenges. The challenges identified in the study were of two main types: challenges associated with teaching critical reading; and challenges related to the qualities of learners.

4.3.1 Teaching related challenges in implementing critical reading

During the data analysis it was found that teaching related challenges are of two major types. The first type of challenges is related to the lack of participants' experience in teaching critical reading. The source of the second difficulty is associated with the lack of appropriate resources to develop students' critical reading skills.

4.3.1.1 Lack of experience

Talking about challenges in teaching critical reading, six out of seven participants emphasized that lack of experience in teaching critical reading affects the quality of their instruction. They developed understanding of critical reading only after they started to work at the Nazarbayev Intellectual School. While working in other schools in Kazakhstan they taught the English language only at NIS they have to teach content based English, Global Perspectives classes, and critical thinking classes where significant attention is paid to reading texts in different spheres. Because teaching these courses involved the use of various complex- leveled texts, the teachers have to develop their own critical reading skills and as well as the ability to train students as critical readers.

While having to perform these functions, the participants mentioned that they had no specialized training in critical reading instruction. Their learning happened mostly ad hoc as the result of the influence the individuality of their language teachers met at the university, instructors of after school debates clubs, or Gifted Education courses. For instance, one of the participants stated: "the first person to influence me, it was my teacher of English at university… she took her time to sit down and to discuss read books with me" (Aigul).

In addition, all of the participants complained that most of their approaches to teach critical reading are based on intuition. While they preferred to have more specialized theoretical and practical preparation to be more proficient as critical reading instructors. The following response of one of the participant demonstrates this finding: "I wasn't grown in the environment, which encouraged critical reading. I just started to learn how to read critically by myself. I still try to figure out the process and how it works for me" (Erdos).

4.3.1.2 Lack of resources

Another teacher-related challenge deals with the lack of texts in existing textbooks that could be used for teaching critical reading. For instance on of the teachers said: We need texts to make them (students) do mini-research. And I would like to use this type of texts to ask questions are not supposed to have one obvious answer" (Yekaterina).

The reason is that the primary outcome expected from the teachers is preparing students to pass examinations. As a result, most of the texts used by teachers are factual and examination driven. In addition, participants emphasized that most of the texts are factual versus argumentative and the number of texts in the textbooks for teaching critical reading is insufficient. So, it takes a lot of time for teachers to search for the appropriate texts outside the textbooks to address the requirements for critical reading instruction. Teachers meant that the available texts and tasks are usually intended for practicing basic reading skills: identifying main idea of the text and reading for specific or factual information. One of the interviewees claimed: "Unfortunately, it is hard for me to develop critical reading skills without appropriate resources…Most of the text books we use are oriented to practicing primary reading skills, like finding the main points…" (Anna).

The tasks included in the text together with texts are also -oriented to recitation of facts. Therefore, teachers often have to adapt and create the tasks to check critical reading. More specifically, some participants express their need in the resources to teach to deduce implied meaning, compare different perspectives and to recognise author's attitude.

Generally, all the participants want to have more access to resources for teaching critical reading and would prefer to work with good resources recommended by curriculum, since they do not have sufficient confidence in their teaching of critical

reading. For the majority of teachers it was important to work with the resources (texts and tasks) designed by experts and relevant to meet curriculum requirements to be more confident in critical reading teaching taken into account the absence of specialized training.

4.3.2 Learning related challenges in teaching critical reading

In addition to teaching related challenges, many participants indicated challenges associated with learners' abilities. Two main findings are presented in this section. They are the factors that students' level of academic language is not advanced enough to support teaching of critical reading; and students have mostly basic reading skills developed in English and their native language. It means that students are not ready to be taught critical reading at more advanced language level.

4.3.2.1 Insufficient language level of students

The first characteristic presented by participants as one of the learner related challenge to teach critical reading was insufficient level of students' English. Meanwhile, as it was mentioned in the Literature review section, critical reading requires more advanced level of the language. It means the requirement for teaching critical reading is a particular level of knowledge of the vocabulary, understanding of the stylistics issues, and complex Grammar structures.

More specifically, participants noted that lack of advanced academic vocabulary makes deducing meaning from the context hard for students. It is obvious that if students are confused about the meaning of most words in the text, they are not able to implement more critical analysis of the text. It is illustrated by the following words of a participant:

"My students are still struggling with recognizing synonyms of academic words. As a

matter of fact, their vocabulary includes high – frequently used everyday words" (Amina).

Another important language aspect in view of most of the participants was the ability

of students to understand the style of the writer and the kind of registers used by him/her.

Teachers complained that many of their students are not trained enough to recognise

stylistics issues. Specifically, they lack skills in understanding of implied meaning and

recognizing inconsistencies in arguments. Despite the fact that these skills are required by

the curriculum and teachers have to train their students in these skills.

The third language related challenge is the ability of students to recognize both

advanced Grammar structures and complex syntaxes. Specifically, teachers mentioned that

they have to spend the time at the lesson to explain grammar and syntax instead of

practicing more critical reading skills. This issue was reflected in the words of one of the

respondents:

> I have noticed that the most challenging for them (students) is their understanding of
> advanced sentence structures. It influences their understanding of the meaning.
> When reading they do not see how the ideas are connected. That is why they cannot
> find the evidence in the text to complete the task (Anna).

4.3.2.2 Basic reading skills of students

The second characteristic of students was viewed by participants as one of the

learner related challenge to teach critical reading was students' basic reading skills. This

challenge was not limited to English. The respondents indicated that their students often

have basic reading skills in their first and second languages. Meanwhile according to the

literature before starting reading critically, a person has to develop basic reading skills.

These skills include initial understanding of the presented information; understanding the

main idea; reading for a purpose of the author and for evidence. Teachers noted that

students have difficulties in analysis because they had little practice during their studying

languages at school. Moreover, five out of seven teachers hypothesized that lack of basic

reading practice was a consequence of the exam – oriented teaching. Specifically, teachers

spent a lot of time training students' skills for identifying main idea and searching for

details. Some of the respondents articulated this issue with the following words: "To my

mind, students lack skills of analysis, it is hard for them to find evidence and support their

arguments, even when they are asked specific questions" (Diana).

4.4 RQ 3: What kind of support in critical reading instruction is available for

teachers to address their challenges?

Following the previous section about of challenges in implementing critical reading,

this part presents the findings to answer the third research question. It was important for

the researcher to hear the voice of teachers and school leadership team to get different

perspectives to answer that question. That is why the data of two sets of the interviews

were analyzed in this section. Seven English and Global Perspectives teachers and three

school leaders took part in the study. In addition to that document analysis was used to

identify what kind of support is available for teachers in their implementing of critical

reading. Overall, as the result of the analysis two main finding were revealed. First, regular

support is available for teachers to teach critical reading, however, this support does not

address teachers' professional needs completely. Second, in those conditions teachers have

to rely on support from their peers within their professional groups.

4.4.1 Regular support is available for teachers to teach critical reading, however, this

support does not address teachers' professional needs completely.

Based on the responds of the participants they are not provided with any special course of professional development to teach critical reading. The only support that is available and regular comes in the form of lesson observations and feedback associated with them. However, many of the teachers mentioned that only lesson observations and feedback are not sufficient. Teachers expressed the wish to get special training to be more proficient in implementing critical reading. This course might provide them with more theoretical understanding and practical experience. "I was not trained to teach critical reading… and I think that I really need workshops to gain more practice and to be more confident" (Amina).

> In addition to that, many teachers mentioned that they would like to have some basic resources recommended for two reasons. First, they want to get clear guidelines what and how to teach. Second, they wish to be provided with the list of appropriate texts for teaching critical reading. "I am not trained to teach critical reading. I prefer to follow the instruction given by experts what and how to teach…" (Yekaterina).

The results of the interviews were compared with data from document analysis of different levels of standard curricular (subject programmes, course plans, and teachers' guide). It was found that these curricular documents do not include clear instruction what to teach in terms of and how to teach critical reading. The list of the resources recommended in curriculum is relatively short to cover topics and learning objectives regarding critical reading skills. They contain a small number of recommended resources to practice such skills as deducing meaning, recognizing arguments and implicit meanings. Therefore, teachers did not get enough support with curricular recommendations based on document analysis.

4.4.2 Teachers have to rely on support from their peers within their professional groups

In addition to that, all participants highlighted the significance of the support that they get from the other colleagues in teaching critical reading. Both teachers and school

leaders indicated the fact that the atmosphere in the department is very collaborative and teachers are ready to discuss their needs and share their experience to find the solution to different challenges including challenges associated with teaching critical reading. Six out of seven teachers mentioned that they refer to their colleagues for advice facing difficulties in teaching critical reading. They emphasized that the support that they get from their peers affects their teaching practice in a positive way. Specifically, this support is more important for the teachers with less experience in teaching critical reading, because they are free to ask for recommendations and receive qualified support. One of the most effective ways of collaboration was lesson observation. Teachers mentioned that they observe each other's lessons with subsequent discussion. In addition to that, they build cooperative teams according to the grades they teach, their professional interests and needs. This practice seems to have a positive impact on teaching critical reading. It is also clearly illustrated in the statement of one of the participants: "My more experienced colleague supported me throughout the first period and was eager to share the knowledge and resources she has. I always wonder where this person finds new ideas how to help our students, suggests different graphic organizers and many other things" (Julia).

4.4.3 NIS teachers build collaborative culture to support their teaching critical reading (co-planning; discussion; sharing their experience)

Furthermore, during studying the results of the interviews and lesson observation it was found that Nazarbayev Intellectual school teachers started to develop new teaching culture. It refers to collaborative planning. In the literature the procedure of planning the course or lessons was described as a single-person practice. In the case of the research site it is possible to talk about positive influence of co-planning on the teachers practice to teach critical reading. Eight out ten respondents expressed positive attitude to the co-

planning. It is noteworthy that, the perspectives of both groups of participants are the same. There was no big difference in their answers to describe collaborative planning. Both teachers and representatives of school leadership mentioned that the collaborative planning for reading classes supports faculty staff and gives more confidence in implementing critical reading. More specifically, collaborative planning is followed by a discussion of the results of the lessons, students' academic performance and by identifying the most effective methods to teach critical reading at the meta-cognitive level. In addition to that, the co-planning practices were facilitated by administrators, who scheduled special hours for this co-planning so that teachers have no obstacles to come together. The positive influence of this change in the school practice is evidenced by the following statements: "We use our co-planning time effectively, to my mind… discussing how do develop critical readers in a complex of different activities. We (teachers) try to use this opportunity to share our experience in implementing new strategies and reflecting on the results" (Anna). "As school leaders we try to support collaboration in planning. Teachers need special time to meet their colleagues during the week to build new links between subjects" (Timur).

4.5 RQ 4: How do teachers teach critical reading? (The methods and strategies which are used by them)

This section shows that teachers use critical reading approach in their practice. Through the data of the interviews with teachers, talks to members of school's leadership and lesson observation it was possible to figure out the answer to the last research question. There were three main findings in this section. First, teachers are aware of the importance of their role as a critical reading instructor. Second, teachers use common

methods to teach critical reading which were also reviewed in the literature. Third, teachers evaluate their experience in teaching critical reading for further professional development.

4.5.1 Teachers are aware of the importance of their role as a critical reading instructor (positive attitude to this challenge, scaffolding)

Interestingly, despite the challenges in implementing critical reading, the majority of participants expressed positive attitude regarding the reform. Five out of seven teachers are eager to change their teaching style to support their students as critical readers. More specifically, they highlight their own responsibility as the key critical reading instructor. Most of respondents showed their positive feelings and beliefs through the language they used to express their thoughts. Teachers highlighted that they believe in the ability to handle their teaching related challenges. In addition to that, they gave examples of their students' progress due to the methods of teaching critical reading implemented by teachers. It was a clear message that teachers are able to overcome their challenges when they have a desire for it and are supported by their school community. This message could be formulated with the words of one of the participants: "If you (a teacher) do not practice critical reading, if you have no wish to develop your teaching, it will be difficult, even for school administration to find the correct road or path to your development as a trainer of critical reading" (Anna).

In addition to the data of interviews, the lesson observation proved that the atmosphere of the classrooms is friendly and supportive to develop critical readers. Teachers used a variety of scaffolding strategies to increase the level of students' comfort and to form students' positive attitude toward to critical reading practice. For instance, one of the English lesson observations included pre-reading activity (brainstorming), which

allowed evoking students' background knowledge and perception about communication in their country and all over the world. Graphic Organizer "Gestures, their origin and meaning" was used by the teacher as additional support. Moreover, the teacher supported students asking Instruction Checking Questions (ICQ) and Content Checking Questions (CCQs). Most of the other questions used by the teacher were for analysis and synthesis as well as for evaluation and creation.

Regarding to the notion of scaffolding, six out of ten participants highlighted the advantage of this type of support while interviews. Talking about some positive changes in the classroom due to scaffolding, it was mentioned by participants that students trust teachers more, they are more able to complete the reading tasks and their vocabulary, their understanding of grammar functions increased. One of the respondents told about the success as the positive result: "… not all students have high achievements in critical reading, but even little success is also a great result of hard work and is appreciated by students" (Julia). These positive dynamics supports teachers in their work.

4.5.2 Teachers use common methods of teaching critical reading

One of the main findings of this study, were some common methods to teach critical reading which were collected and reviewed after interviews and lesson observations. It was possible to compare them with the methods of teaching critical reading which were described in the Literature Review section. Overall these methods were categorized into three main groups: 1) compulsory practice of planning pre-, while-, and post- reading activities; 2) asking high order thinking questions; 3) using of Graphic organizers.

It is important to mention, that the first group of strategies including pre-, while-, and post- reading activities is not used for teaching critical reading only. However, participants

highlighted their importance because these activities, tools and strategies guide the students through their reading. During lesson observations which were used to gain firsthand experience it was possible to identify these activities. As a rule, pre- and post-activities were organized by teachers using group or pair work for more support. In addition to that, individual reading activity gave students more opportunities to read critically without assistance with the support of the task and of the teacher.

Talking about the role of questions in teaching critical reading, all the participants emphasized teacher's ability to ask appropriate questions. Specifically, teachers highlighted the importance of high order thinking questions because they help teachers to facilitate students' skills to analyze, synthesize and evaluate. One of the participants emphasized: "to support my students while completing the task I guide them with questions to categorize, to compare and justify" (Diana). Data from the interviews with teachers and lesson observation drew a picture that questions are used by teachers at different stages of the reading. In addition to that, teachers encourage students to ask a variety of questions during their work with the information to be critical readers.

Another meaningful tool that was mentioned by participants and observed during lessons was graphic organizers. These tools were reviewed in the literature and in the real classroom teachers use them widely. Seven out of ten participants explained that graphic organizers are beneficial for the work with the text. It is easier for students to collect and to summarize the information from the text in the kind of table, graph or chart and then analyze it. Some of participants emphasized that this organization of the read information supports student to understand what is stated, what is meant, what is assumed to draw their personal inferences. "Graphic organizers are useful to use. They are simple, but effective tools. You are guided during your work with the text" (Aigul). During lesson observation

it was identified that as a rule, teachers used graphic organizers to collect students' previous knowledge to compare it with the information given in the text, recognize positive and negative aspects, draw conclusions and build new knowledge.

4.5.3 Teachers evaluate their experience in teaching critical reading for further development (students' achievements; feedback from students\colleagues; results of observations)

The participation in this study gave teachers opportunity to reflect to their teaching critical reading. They evaluated their own role in teaching critical reading and compared their background experience with contemporary situation in their classroom. Specifically, most of them highlighted the importance of feedback from their students, colleagues and administrative team as an input for self-evaluation and further professional development in implementing critical reading.

Moreover, data of the interviews and lesson observation identified that teachers reflect on every lesson to develop the methods of scaffolding and teaching. "Together we develop our way of teaching… we discuss the most and less effective methods after each lesson. We develop our way of thinking" (Amina). Teachers collect and select strategies and approaches for making teaching critical reading more effective. In addition to that, they are going to invite other subject teachers, librarians and parents to join their efforts as the whole school community to support students' development as critical readers.

4.6 Summary

This chapter presented the main findings of the study. The findings were divided into the particular categories and were supported with the results of interviews, lesson

observations notes and documents analysis. The categories were selected in accordance

with research questions.

Overall, teachers have an understanding what critical reading is, they identified key

challenges they face and described common methods they use. These categories will be

further described and examined in relevance with literature review and existing practices

in Discussion chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion

In the previous chapter the major findings of the study about teachers' experience in implementing critical reading were presented. They were identified in order to answer research questions during the interviews, lesson observation and document analysis.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the main findings and interpret them. The findings were considered from different perspectives in relation to the prior studies which were reviewed in the literature. Specifically, the main findings were discussed in their relation to each research question.

5.1 Discussion related to the research question 1 (teachers' understanding)

The first two findings of the study suggest that teachers define critical reading differently. This factor is in a line with findings of Bosley (2008) and Wilson (2016). During their studies both of the researchers faced a number of definitions and approaches regarding critical reading interviewing teachers and observing their lessons. Their findings refer to the fact that the majority of teachers interpret the term "critical reading" from different viewpoints. Similarly, in this case the results of the study were expected because we found no agreement among Kazakhstani participants on the definition of *critical reading*. As Wilson (2016) highlighted that teachers consider critical reading in the relation to critical thinking, the respondents at the research site used a number of verbs to describe different levels of thinking in terms of Bloom's Taxonomy. Despite that fact, it was difficult for the participants to express clear statement to define critical reading due to the lack of theoretical knowledge and appropriate specialized training to be more aware of critical reading approach.

In addition to that, some of the teachers define critical reading as an alternative way of reading. They compared critical reading with an opportunity for self – reflection. This idea was close to the study of McDonald (2004) who claimed that critical reading goes beyond the typical approaches to reading and emphasized the importance of "personal respond" (McDonald, 2004). Probably, Kazakhstani teachers consider critical reading as more advanced level of reflecting the read information. In this case they try to report that this type of reading requires personal inner growth. Therefore, participants highlighted the importance of being mature to read information critically.

5.2 Discussion related to the research question 2 (teachers' challenges in implementing critical reading)

Two main findings reflected challenges that the participants of the study face in implementing critical reading. The first finding is that teachers lack experience and have poor access to teaching resources. The second finding is learning-related: many teachers pointed to the insufficient level of students' English language to be taught critical reading. In addition to that the majority of students operate with basic reading skills which are not enough to work with the texts critically.

The findings of teaching related challenges are consistent with the previous studies conducted by Albeckay (2014) and Karadağ (2014). The researchers found that teachers are not confident in implementing critical reading and the reason for their difficulties is absence of specialized training or specific course. This fact is similar to the situation of teachers in Kazakhstan. Specifically, the participants of the study highlighted they are not aware of critical reading approach. Moreover, they had to gain their experience in teaching

critical reading studying this instruction independently without being supported by resources what to teach and how to teach.

The experience of teachers in Kazakhstan refers to the findings of Nilson (2003) and Allen (2004). These researchers indicated self-study as one of the main ways for teachers to get their theoretical and practical preparation. However, self – study is not considered to be an efficient way of professional development in schools of Kazakhstan. First, teachers are too busy with competing novel practices. The participants of the study mentioned their hard and time consuming work in a variety of other educational projects. Moreover, teachers of the senior grades, where critical reading is supposed to be taught to prepare students for their study at university, are required to prepare their students to pass the exams. It means that teachers can hardly ever find time for their professional development.

On the other hands, the reviewed literature described the previous studies which were conducted at the universities. This is different from the situation which was presented in this case study. That is why it was hard to compare the main features of teachers' pre-service training. Therefore, there is a distinct need to study this issue concerning teachers' background preparing to teach critical reading further.

In addition to the teaching related challenges, teachers face learning related challenges in implementing critical reading. To overcome these challenges participants indicated that they have to develop their students' level of the English language.

5.3 Discussion related to the research question 3 (what kind of support is available to teach critical reading)

During the study it was found that some support to teach critical reading is available. However, regular support for teachers in implementing critical reading is presented in a

form of lesson observation. It is obvious, that participants emphasized that school leaders and colleagues are not able to address teachers' needs completely with the feedback after the lesson observation. More specifically, the school leaders' objectives to observe the lessons could be far away from the critical reading approach and how it is implemented by teachers. As a rule, school administrators observe the lessons to identify the effectiveness of classroom management or differentiated instruction. It may be beneficial to identify teachers' professional needs in implementing critical reading approach. First, it could be an appropriate base to join teachers into groups according their area of interest and their challenges they face in their everyday practice. Second, this study may encourage teachers to participate in different projects as Action Research or Lesson study to conduct small scale research for deeper understanding their professional difficulties and find the most efficient solution with support of their colleagues and school leaders.

However, one of the unexpected findings of the study was some positive consequence of teachers' collaborative work. This process includes discussion with peers the challenges teachers face in implementing critical reading instruction.

Generally, teachers at the research site are actively involved into collaborative planning of lessons. It was found that it is extremely important for teachers in the absence of any specialized course of professional development to teach critical reading. Moreover, this way of professional development is highly recommended and supported by school administrators. The support includes the schedule for faculty meetings and time for collaborative planning which was developed and used effectively at the school. It is noteworthy that, the best practices and outcomes of the collaborative work are demonstrated for the whole school community.

Comparing this opportunity to work as a team with their previous experience in mainstream schools, all the participants highlighted in their interview what kind of benefits they get. Teachers discuss their challenges in teaching critical reading, evaluate the methods they implement, and share the resources. This way of collaboration increases extend of work with peers and it makes teachers more positive as well, because collaborative work changed their attitude towards peer support. If in the past it was hard for them to talk with each other in open ways, now teachers are used to listen to every team member and consider the critical reading issues from different perspectives. It means this positive outcome of implementing critical reading will have an impact on teachers' community. Because once teachers recognized advantages of collaboration, they might apply this co-planning when dealing with other innovations in curriculum and instruction.

Therefore, the advantages of collaborative work, which were identified during the study as unexpected finding, could be studied in detail in future. As a rule, some of the cases of implementing critical reading described in the literature presented individual work of teachers. Others prior studies on this concern did not pay any attention how the work of teachers is organized to support them and address their professional needs. Therefore, the positive practice of NIS teachers' cooperation to support each other in the way of observing each other lessons, discussing concerning points in implemented methods and sharing of the most successful experience is worth to be shared. It means that this experience of Kazakhstani teachers may be beneficial in regard of educational reforms. Moreover, the collaborative planning approach of this NIS school could be initiated to implement in the secondary schools of the whole country.

5.4 Discussion related to the research question 4 (methods of teaching critical reading)

Three findings were indicated during the interviews with participants answering the research question how they teach critical reading. The first finding reveals ta that teachers are aware of their role in developing critical readers. The participants highlighted that critical reading skills are essential for receiving and evaluating information. They express rather positive attitude to their challenges in implementing critical reading approach. First, they monitored the progress of their students' academic performance to complete tasks related to critical reading. Second, the teachers highlighted the importance of their collaboration with other colleagues to overcome these challenges.

In addition to that teachers try to select more effective strategies to support their students to read critically. The main strategy that was noted by participants was scaffolding. This approach is in a line with the idea of "delicate scaffolding" (Wilson, 2016). Delicate scaffolding was presented in the Literature Review section. The main features of this approach are learning – provoking atmosphere in the classroom, non-threatening environment, and well – planned classroom management. During lesson observation it was clear that the participants of this study follow similar approach. Teachers encouraged their students to work with high order thinking questions and challenging critical reading tasks. In addition to that the atmosphere in all the classrooms was friendly and students were free to ask, comment and react during their learning. Moreover, teachers ask students for regular feedback and they use students' responses to develop their teaching style.

This study found that all participants emphasized during interviews the importance of pre-reading, while - reading, and post-reading activities to teach critical reading. In

addition to that they demonstrated at their lessons well – balanced set of the activities

before-, while- and after – reading the texts. This finding is consistent with the studies

conducted by Langer (1994, 1995), Kolb (2001), Harvey and Goudvis (2007) which were

revised in the Literature review. More specifically, teachers asked high-order thinking

questions at all the stages of reading to support students in their learning to study texts

deeply. Teachers in this study used questions recommended by Marshall and Rowland

(2006, p.152). During the lesson observation it was obvious that teachers paid attention to

the author's purpose and approach as well as to the content of the reading and the style of

the texts.

In addition to the pre-reading, while - reading, and post-reading activities and asking

questions, teachers practice note – taking with their students. According to Axelrod,

Cooper, and Warriner (1999 or 2002), Peirce (2006) and Linkon (2008) note –taking are

basic critical reading strategies. As a rule, participants of the study implement note-taking

for identifying key words. It helps their students to build clear understanding of the main

idea of the text. Furthermore, comparing and analyzing the key words students are able to

read the text critically and be more successful in completing reading tasks.

In addition to that, there was an unexpected approach not mentioned in the literature,

the use of note taking and Graphic organizers. Graphic organizers are visuals used to

present information in the text. The samples of graphic organizers for different purposes

could be found on the Internet. Graphic organizers are simple to use because they include

minimal and clear instruction. In addition to that they could be focused on any aspects to

practice in reading.

During the interview the majority of participants indicated that graphic organizers

provide their students with visual support to work with the text concentrating more on the

particular task. They are a kind of guideline for students to facilitate their critical reading. Teachers, who are working at this research site, widely use Graphic organizers for defining author's purpose, recognizing cause and effect, identifying problem and finding solution. Moreover, teachers are able to adapt ready-made organizers or create their own graphic organizers to support and scaffold their students to read critically.

5.5 Summary

This chapter presented discussion of major findings of the study in their relation to the research questions. The most of the findings were expected and described in the literature as well as they were identified in this study. However, there were two unexpected findings. The first finding was referring to support that is available in accordance to collaborative culture built at school. The second finding was indicated observing teachers' methods and was presented with using graphic organizers.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the whole study of NIS teachers' experience in implementing critical reading. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section presents the summary of the study. The second section includes potential recommendations which might be essential for the school administrators and policy makers to train and support teachers to develop their students' critical reading skills. The implications for further study are considered in the third section.

6.1 Summary of the study

Currently, one of the main aims of educational reforms in Kazakhstan is to increase young generation's level of critical reading as the main function of human literacy. It was stated in the introduction of this study that critical reading is regarded as one of the most essential abilities of every person to succeed in his career. Critical reading skills are significant in evaluating the accuracy and validity of information, finding credible resources for studying and working, considering different perspectives for being proficient. The school is the first institution where these skills should be developed and the teacher is the main person to train young children as critical readers.

The purpose of the study was to explore NIS teachers' understanding of critical reading, their pre-service training background and implementing critical reading. The following research questions were set to achieve the purpose of the study: (1) How do teachers understand the concept of critical reading?; (2) What kind of challenges do teachers face in critical reading instruction?; (3) What kind of support is available for teachers in implementing critical reading?; (4) How do teachers teach critical reading?

The study used a case study design to answer the research questions. The data collection methods included one-to-one qualitative interviews with two groups of participants: teachers and school administrators, lesson observation and document analysis. The collected data were analyzed using thematic coding to identify the major findings. These findings were compared with reviewed literature and discussed taking into account different views of the researchers in the field of implementing critical reading and experience of the teachers of the particular school.

To sum up, the study achieved the purpose stated at the beginning and found answers to all four research questions. The study demonstrated the following findings. First, the majority of teachers understand critical reading in relation to critical thinking. Second, the common understanding of critical reading was not identified.

In addition to that, two types of difficulties of teachers in implementing critical reading were described. Some of them were teaching related challenges with lack of special experience and lack of appropriate resources. As well as learning related challenges were named by participants. These difficulties include insufficient language level of students and basic reading skills of students, which disturb teaching critical reading.

Furthermore, it was concluded that NIS teachers accumulated positive experience including some effective methods of teaching critical reading and collaborative planning practice. Findings of the study demonstrated that regular support was available for teachers even if this support did not address teachers' professional needs completely. In this case, teachers started to rely on support from their peers within their professional groups and built collaborative culture to support their teaching critical reading. Moreover, teachers were aware of the importance of their role as a critical reading instructor and expressed positive attitude to this challenge. They evaluated their experience in teaching critical

reading for further development; it was proved with students' achievements; feedback from students and colleagues, results of observations. The practical experience of the participants might be studied in future to add more relevant details to the conducted study.

6.2 Recommendations

Regarding the findings of the study, some recommendations were designed to meet teachers' professional needs in implementing critical reading. These recommendations were mainly focused on challenges of teachers and their positive experience referring to their practice of teaching critical reading.

6.2.1 Recommendations for teachers

Due to the fact that the main challenges of teachers which were identified in the study include teaching related and learning related difficulties, it may be beneficial for them to work in both directions. First, to fill in the gap in own experience to teach critical reading it could be advised to find out major weaknesses and close the gap with additional reading on this issue. Moreover, there are a number of online courses which are available for free and some of them might be useful for further self-education.

As for learning related challenges, teachers should analyze their students' skills and academic achievements in critical reading individually. Afterwards, it would be recommended to develop teaching using a variety of scaffolding strategies and differentiated instruction. Taking into account that students have the same difficulties to read texts critically in their native and second languages, it may be beneficial to plan collaborative work with other language and subject teachers to overcome this challenge.

6.2.2 Recommendations for school leaders

In regard to the situation at the research site that support provided by school administrators for teachers as critical reading instructors is limited, it may be recommended to study the positive experience of this school in detail. First, it could be additional encouragement and support for teachers to plan teaching and learning, discuss current concerns and share effective practices to teach critical reading collaboratively. Second, school leaders could develop the idea of whole community integration. For instance, to organize workshops to demonstrate cross curricular links, find area for further students' development being critical readers. Projects like Action Research and Lesson Study, which gain their popularity at schools, could be focused on teaching critical reading.

6.2.3 Recommendations for the teacher training centers \ for the organizations of teachers' professional development

First, according to the findings of the study, teachers face challenge of lack of professional training to teach critical reading. Addressing this challenge the institutions responsible for teachers' professional development could be recommended to review, adapt or design curriculum for the courses on critical reading.

In addition to that, these organizations could study the existing experience of the teachers of different schools in different regions in the country. It may be beneficial to share the most effective practices by inviting the most experienced teachers to conduct training or workshops on critical reading throughout the country.

6.2.4 Recommendations for policy makers

During the study the range of the problems were identified concerning curriculum and text books. The participants highlighted the lack of the resources both for guiding the teaching of critical reading and the tasks in the text books to develop critical readers. Due to these facts, it could be recommended to review the text books as well as curriculum for some particular subjects like Kazakh, Russian or English to address this challenge.

Moreover, the policy makers could discuss the possibility to train a group of representatives of each region of Kazakhstan as critical reading instructors for further support of the work of pre-service and professional development institutions. This way could save resources not to hire international experts in the future. This would also allow developing our national system of teaching critical reading taking into account local experience and our students' educational needs.

6.3 Implications for further study

The study was focused on teachers' experience in implementing critical reading. This was a case of Nazarbayev Intellectual school. As a result, there were some limitations. First, limited number of participants and they presented experience of teaching two subjects: English and Global perspectives. Second, the study demonstrated findings of teachers' experience of one particular school in one particular region of Kazakhstan. Consequently, these findings could not be generalized. Therefore, it would be recommended to conduct further study to expand the area for research in the future.

In addition to that, there was the attempt to find answers to the all research questions during reviewing related literature and conducting this study. However, some of the questions left answered partially. These include the questions about teachers' pre-service

training and support which is available in curriculum. It would be significant for

Kazakhstan to explore experience of the secondary schools in other countries to find

efficient ways regarding these issues. It would allow to study, adapt and integrate the best

practices in teaching critical reading for developing and implementing the common

approach with appropriate guidelines and resources to use within the whole country.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Informed Consent Form

Dear colleague,

I am a master degree student of Graduate School of Education of Nazarbayev University (NUGSE). I plan to conduct a research titled "High school teachers experience in implementing critical reading: Nazarbayev Intellectual schools, Kazakhstan". Within the frame of this research, I will need to conduct an interview with some people at your school.

DESCRIPTION: You are invited to participate in **a research study** on the purpose to explore how the educators learn to teach critical reading, how they teach it in the absence of specific course for professional development addressing this issue and what kind of support are they provided with. You will be asked to take part in the interview. The interview will last for no more than 60 minutes; it will take place in December 2016 – January 2017 at your school. The schedule of your interview will be negotiated with you beforehand. You will be asked to answer 10-12 open-ended questions. With your permission, the interviews then will be audio taped for the further data analyses. The interview data will be confidential; your name will be substituted with a pseudonym. After the completing the research, the audio tapes will be destroyed.

TIME INVOLVEMENT: Your participation will take approximately 60 minutes for the interview and 60 minutes for a member checking.

RISKS AND BENEFITS: The risks associated with this study are minimal through the keeping the rules and procedures of conducting the study. The benefits which may reasonably be expected to result from this study are opportunities to reflect your background knowledge, skills and practice to identify own strengths and areas for further professional development. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will not affect your employment.

PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS: If you have read this form and have decided to participate in this project, please understand your **participation is voluntary** and you have the **right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled**. **The alternative is not to participate.** You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. The results of this research study may be presented at scientific or professional meetings or published in scientific journals.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Questions: If you have any questions, concerns or complaints about this research, its procedures, risks and benefits, contact the Master's Thesis Supervisor for this student work,

Name	*Email*	*Phone Number*
Svetlana Yutsevichutene	svetlana.yutsevichutene@nu.edu.kz	*+ 7 708 910 89 43*
Aliya Kuzhabekoba	aliya.kuzhabekova@nu.edu.kz	

Independent Contact: If you are not satisfied with how this study is being conducted, or if you have any concerns, complaints, or general questions about the research or your rights as a participant, please contact the NUGSE Research Committee to speak to someone independent of the research team at +7 7172 709359. You can also write an email to the NUGSE Research Committee at gse_researchcommittee@nu.edu.kz

Please sign this consent from if you agree to participate in this study.

- I have carefully read the information provided;

- I have been given full information regarding the purpose and procedures of the study;

- I understand how the data collected will be used, and that any confidential information will be seen only by the researchers and will not be revealed to anyone else;

- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason;

- With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

Signature: _____   Date: _____

The extra copy of this signed and dated consent form is for you to keep.

According to the law of the Republic of Kazakhstan an individual under the age of 18

is considered a child. Any participant falling into that category should be given the

Parental Consent Form and have it signed by at least one of his/her parent(s) or

guardian(s).

Appendix B: Interview Protocol (for teachers)

Title: High school teachers experience in implementing critical reading: Nazarbayev

Intellectual schools, Kazakhstan

Date: **Place:**   **Time:**

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

[After introducing yourself, thank the participant for agreement to be interviewed, tell the

participant about (a) the purpose of the study, (b) the measures assuring the confidentiality

of the interviewee (the name of the participant and other people mentioned in his\her

answers will not be revealed), and (c) the approximate time for the interview.]

[Ask the interviewee to read carefully and sign the consent form.]

[Ask the interviewee's permission to use the tape recorder.]

[Test a tape recorder.]

Questions:

1) What is critical reading? Can you define it with your own words?

2) What problems do you face in teaching critical reading? How do you manage\solve

them? Can you give examples?

3) What are the sources of those challenges? Why?

4) Name three main people/events/experiences that were the most supportive in terms of

your teaching critical reading? Why?

5) What were some positive and negative things regarding the teaching critical reading

during the last year?

6) What can you tell about administration\ team leaders' involvement to support your critical reading teaching? Can you give examples?

7) What can you tell about your colleagues' involvement in the implementation of critical reading? Can you give examples?

8) How do the main documents (Subject Programme, Course Plans and etc.) support you in teaching critical reading?

9) How do you support your students to deal with critical reading tasks? Can you give examples?

10) What strategies or methods do you use to develop your students' critical reading skills?

11) What will you suggest in regarding the critical reading teaching?

12) Is there anything else you would want me to know about your experience in implementing critical reading instruction?

[Thank participants for answering the questions in the interview. Assure them again about the confidentiality of received information. Acknowledge them about the possibility to do a member check.]

Source: Creswell, 2014

Appendix C: Interview Protocol (for school administrators)

Title: High school teachers experience in implementing critical reading: Nazarbayev

Intellectual schools, Kazakhstan

Date: **Place:**   **Time:**

Interviewee:

Position of Interviewee:

[After introducing yourself, thank the participant for agreement to be interviewed, tell the

participant about (a) the purpose of the study, (b) the measures assuring the confidentiality

of the interviewee (the name of the participant and other people mentioned in his\her

answers will not be revealed), and (c) the approximate time for the interview.]

[Ask the interviewee to read carefully and sign the consent form.]

[Ask the interviewee's permission to use the tape recorder.]

[Test a tape recorder.]

Questions:

1) What is critical reading? Can you define it with your own words?

2) What problems do teachers face in teaching critical reading? How do they

manage\solve them? Can you give examples?

3) What are the sources of those challenges? Why?

4) Name three main people/events/experiences that are the most supportive for teachers in

terms of teaching critical reading? Why?

5) What were some positive and negative things regarding the teaching critical reading

during the last year?

6) What can you tell about administration\ team leaders' involvement to support critical

reading teaching? Can you give examples?

7) How do the main documents (Subject Programme, Course Plans and etc.) support

teaching critical reading?

8) What strategies or methods are used by teachers to develop their students' critical

reading skills?

9) What will you suggest in regarding the critical reading teaching?

10) Is there anything else you would want me to know about your experience in

implementing critical reading instruction at your school?

[Thank participants for answering the questions in the interview. Assure them again about

the confidentiality of received information. Acknowledge them about the possibility to do

a member check.]

Source: Creswell, 2014

Appendix D: Observational Protocol

Project: High school teachers experience in implementing critical reading: Nazarbayev

Intellectual schools, Kazakhstan

Setting:

Lengths of Observation: 40 minutes

Date: **Time:**

Observer:

Observed: Strategies and methods to develop critical reading skills

Descriptive notes	Reflective notes (Questions\interpretations)

Source: Creswell, 2014

Appendix E: Documents Analysis Protocol

Project: High school teachers experience in implementing critical reading: Nazarbayev

Intellectual schools, Kazakhstan

Setting:

Date: **Time:**

Researcher:

	Subject Programme:	Course plan	Teachers' Guide
Is critical reading presented\reflected in the curriculum?			
Are any resources recommended to teach critical reading?			
How many of the resources are recommended?			
What kind of the resources are recommended? (instructional/ methodological? Texts + tasks)?			

Source: created by the author.

Appendix F: Sample of Interview Transcript

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Q-Question\ A-Answer

Interview transcript	Themes	Significant /Quotes
Q:What is critical reading? Can you define it with your own words? A: For me CR is understanding not only the facts and numbers that are seen and explicit in this text but also why it was written, what the idea is being expressed and implied probably…in this text particularly. Also, I guess that I have started noticing it only after being involved in Gifted Education Programme because there I had to read information critically, think critically and use the reasoning. Like what the inferences are, what the perspectives are and other things. And when I started explaining to my students (while teaching them) it was rather challenging for me. For instance, to show what inference is… and other things.	Teacher's understanding of CR Teacher's Experience Teacher's understanding of CR Teacher's Experience	
Q: What problems do you face in teaching critical reading? How do you manage\solve them? Can you give examples? <u>**A: I am not sure that I am teaching CR, I am not sure that I know and understand this term very well**</u>. I have noticed when I'd started also teaching for TOEFL, preparing our students for passing this exam. What is implied in the text? What is the meaning of the word in this particular context?	Teacher's Challenge Teacher's Experience	
These are some challenging moments that I've faced. Even working with advanced students. The students who have got the highest IELTS score among all students of grade 11. And I guess that another challenge is students want to see everything that is on the surface. They don't want to go deeper. For example, if they are choosing like True\False \Not given, they do not differentiate why it is false, and why it is not given. And I guess that is the problem that their CR skills are not developed. It seems that students don't know how to differentiate it. Why it is written here? Why it's not given? If it is written here even It is not applicable to the context. We need to teach them. We need to give them this opportunity. Plan our teaching properly…	Teacher's Challenge Teacher's Role Teacher's Challenge Teacher's Role	QUOTE (CHALLENGE + RECOMMENDATION: CHANGE TEACHING STRATEGIES) QUOTE QUOTE
How do I support my students? (laughing)…this is an interesting question… I believe that I still …need	Teacher's	

some exploring and some experience because I am trying to do my best explaining; what I usually say it is a little bit different mindset, let's say. Usually, when we are reading Russian or Kazakh resources we are not asked such kind of questions, we do not have such kind of tasks. If there are some tasks they will be not very explicit. There might be so much implied meaning. But considering Cambridge resources or any other international resources, I just say you need to stop thinking like a Russian or Kazakh language user. Try to see the picture from the perspective of a native English speaker or non-native speaker but with advanced level of English. And trying to change their perspective however, I am not sure that it works. Just it makes sense. Probably, I try some other things, where we find explanation in some resources for example, you think that this is false you go to the answer sheet and read the explanation. Even for me it is sometimes difficult to understand why. I try to read and to reread again and again. But I am not sure that this contributes to my understanding.	**Experience** **QUOTE** **QUOTE** **Teacher's Role**
Q: You have mentioned some of the sources like mentality, mindset, students' native language. What are other sources of those challenges? Why? A: I am not sure, that I want to add something else. But I guess it is not only the language, it's something more. I am not sure what. Because even we are preparing students for exams. I know that Russian and Kazakh language teachers face the same problem may be there is something that lies not in higher or secondary school, maybe we need to work in primary level. Because at this level we usually ask students: what was said? Who told it? When it happened? And students from their early level do not pay attention to other things. Maybe it must be nurtured in our students. When we work with CR we shouldn't forget about the culture of talking in families. To ask children not only: what did you do today, but why? Why-questions are rarely asked, I would say. **Q: Name three main people/events/experiences that were the most supportive in terms of your teaching critical reading? Why?** A: It is Gifted Education Programme as I mentioned before because we didn't discuss the Giftedness but critical way of thinking. I would be happy to say that it was my online learning session from Oregon University. Probably, also discussing with my colleagues. And collaborative discussion it helps.	**Teacher's Experience** **QUOTE** **Teacher's Experience** **QUOTE** **Teacher's Experience** **Teacher's Experience** **QUOTE**

And the last source but not least these are my students. They come to my lessons, to my tutorials, they ask questions and we discuss them. We try to find the background, but we see this differently and while having this talk, this discussion, we understand and we come to many conclusions.

QUOTE

Q:What were some positive and negative things regarding the teaching critical reading during the last year?

A:

+	--
Some positive …well, I guess we worked a lot with different types of strategies and it helped students to get their progress. We have discussed every small detail, every short sentence, the meaning of it. Why this word was used here. And we have learned the meaning of different linking devices.	I have noticed that the most challenging for them is the structure of sentences. It influences their understanding of the meaning. While reading they do not see how the ideas are linked. That is why they cannot find the evidence and express their thoughts in clear manner.

Teacher's Experience

QUOTE

Q: What can you tell about administration\ team leaders' involvement to support your critical reading teaching? Can you give examples?

A: I guess that this decision to send me to the course of gifted education was one of the steps to my understanding. Even more there were more attempts to explain to teachers PISA structure. It was conversation and we had one speaker of each department from Russian, Kazakh and English. But if you do not practice it, if you have no wish to develop your teaching, it will be difficult, even for administration to find the correct road or path to your development as a critical reader or as a trainer of critical reader. I guess I should be some experts in this area. But I don't know who could do it. May be some specialists who created IELTS or TOEFL questions. But it is about money, and now we have an opportunity to discuss these questions on our regular departmental meetings with co-teachers. It is also another attempt of our administration to help not only with critical reading skills but with other teaching skills.

Q: **What can you tell about your colleagues' involvement in the implementation of critical**

reading? Can you give examples?

A: I am not sure that we are helping each other with critical reading. We discuss learning objectives, we discuss some resources. And when I get the resources and lesson plans after our discussion, I see some interesting ways of reading activities, specifically pre-reading and post-reading tasks. I guess it is helpful for me, even if we didn't talk about it. And with help of their resources, with help of their teaching materials. When I firstly get the idea of skimming it was a crucial to help in reading for recognizing implied meaning. And one more example, recently we created the tasks with questions why did the author use this particular phrase. And I have noticed students understood it differently. And I got the idea that I have to ask more questions about the text. And asking questions is one of the way to help students to understand the text. And repeat to my students that they should not only enjoy the process of reading, they have to work hard. You must find those key elements, but students still have difficulties. Even when they are limited in time, they have 20 minutes for reading one passage. They usually sit and read.

Q: How do the main documents (Subject Programme, Course Plans and etc.) support you in teaching critical reading?

A: The main contribution of these documents is learning objectives. Because with the help of learning objectives I can understand what to teach. And I can see the progress. So if in grade 7 they have to understand some details in the text, however, it is developed in each grade. And in grade 10 students have to understand the most specific information. I cannot say that all of the resources are very useful for me. Every year we try to update our lesson plans. And not only we but it is required by time, so, some new inventions are coming, new teaching methods. And that is why in terms of resources, I cannot say that they are helpful. Learning objectives, they are the main, the key elements of my development.

Q:How do you support your students to deal with critical reading tasks? Can you give examples?

A: I guess that we can support our students differently. But pre-teaching and post-reading activities are as the room for teachers to use strategies. Strategies for different perspectives, for integration and possibility for subject teachers to collaborate. But these

Teacher's Experience

opportunities are for some extra tasks. And what I try to do to support my students, this is collaboration with Kazakh and Russian teachers, especially with Kazakh language teachers, they participate in the same projects I am engaged too. I mean Gifted education. They are willing to help students and even today we have discussed that for teaching literature they have to implement methods which I gave presented and to incorporate the ideas of the Gifted Education programme. To change the way of reading literature. Now they read a book of great Kazakh writer and students have difficulties because of their language limit. I think that in collaboration we, teachers, can solve some problems. To discuss their methods, to use the same technics, and the strategies which are used in the language classes can help students in their struggling to read the text critically.

Teacher's Experience

Q: **What strategies or methods do you use to develop your students' critical reading skills?**
What will your suggestions in regarding the critical reading teaching?

A:There is another important element that I have taken from the collaboration of teachers. This is my colleague who visited seminar in Greece, and she brought the idea to work with symbols\icons when students can see the concept of the work. They are asked to find some abstract ideas in the text, or they must focus on the details, or they have to focus on implication, on conclusion, on inference. Again it is linked to the ideas of Gifted education programme. I think when teach this way systematically...But as a rule, we start to implement then we have no time because we have to prepare students to pass the exams, we have some more things to do. And we go away from our teaching methods. And then again in two – three month period we go back to the methods we started.

Teacher's Challenge

QUOTE

Q: **Is there anything else you would want me to know about your experience in implementing critical reading instruction?**

A: I need more practice. The ideas I mentioned before are from my own practice. This experience is based mostly on my intuition. On some language intuition, my teaching intuition. I have not read much about CR. Maybe if it was a specific document not only a subject programme. Maybe some manuals with tips for teaching critical reading. To cover other areas which are essential and I am sure it will support my teaching.

Teacher's Experience