

# A Preliminary Exploration of the Cultivation of College Students' Critical Thinking from the Perspective of Embodied-Cognitive Linguistics

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**Abstract:** Cultivating students' critical thinking skills is a core requirement of China's current initiative of "integrating literature, history, and philosophy into the New Liberal Arts", and has been explicitly identified as a key objective of high-quality foreign language education in the new era. Starting from existing researches on cultivating college students' critical thinking, this paper concludes a teaching research with a text "*Face to Face with Hurricane Camille*" as a case from the perspective of Embodied-Cognitive Linguistics, which is intended to explore how to foster students' critical thinking in English teaching. The result shows that Embodied-Cognitive Iconicity and Embodied-Cognitive Metaphor Theory contribute to students' mastery of linguistic knowledge, enhancement of literary appreciation, and development of critical thinking skills.

**Keywords:** Embodied-cognitive Linguistics; College Students; Critical Thinking Skills; Cultivation.

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## 1. Introduction

Currently, intensive attention has been paid to the cultivation of college students' critical thinking in foreign language education in China. Cultivating students' humanistic spirit, innovative thinking, and critical thinking has been set as one of the explicit objectives of college foreign language teaching in the *National Quality Criteria for Undergraduate Teaching (Foreign Language and Literature Majors)*(2018) and *College Foreign Language Teaching Guidelines (2020 Edition)* in the new era. This is also the core requirement of China's current philosophy of "integrating literature, history, and philosophy in developing the New Liberal Arts." But a series of questions arise around this objective, e.g. how can critical thinking be developed in English teaching? how can language proficiency and critical thinking be enhanced simultaneously? These questions are frequently raised in the current teaching reform of English Major curricula and even in the reform of college English teaching (Sun Youzhong, 2019).

Language is recognized as the vehicle of human thoughts and learning a foreign language is a possible means to expand thinking. Learning is itself a process to use the brain to meditate on the language elements, which involves several forms of thinking, including critical thinking (Pu Shi, 2022). Language ability should include critical thinking ability (Sun Youzhong, 2017:862). Language courses should serve as the primary platform for cultivating students' critical thinking skills (Dong,2015:365) The Embodied-Cognitive View of language emphasizes the embodied and cognitive nature of language, and advocates that teachers implement embodied-cognitive language teaching to guide students to explore the motivations underlying language generation, and facilitate their progression from lower-level comprehension and memorization to higher-level thinking. Presently, the embodied-cognitive approach to language teaching has gradually become a new trend in foreign language teaching (Qin Xiugui & Huang Xingyun, 2025). Based on previous researches and starting from the Embodied-Cognitive View of language, this paper concludes a teaching research on a text

"*Face to Face with Hurricane Camille*", aimed at cultivating college students' critical thinking in English language teaching.

## 2. Previous Researches on Critical Thinking in English Teaching in China

Critical Thinking was originally proposed and studied in the west. As a core quality required of students in higher education, critical thinking is widely discussed in English teaching. Researches in China show critical thinking is an important comprehensive skill for students to analyze, evaluate and construct arguments, and is vital to students' language learning and academic developments. Huang Yuanshen (1998.:1) pointed out that critical thinking absence is common among English majors and English teachers, and to eradicate critical thinking absence is the top task to cultivate foreign language professionals. Researches centered around critical thinking in China include theoretical exploration, empirical studies and teaching practices. Sun Youzhong (2011) explored in theory the factors contributing to critical thinking absence. Wen Qiufang & Zhou Yan (2006) analyzed the necessity of cultivating English majors' critical thinking ability. Wen Qiufang, et al.(2009) conducted empirical researches to develop measuring instrument designed for students' critical thinking. Li Liwen (2011) explored how to cultivate students' critical thinking in English teaching. Concluding from teaching practices, Chen Zehang (2015) argued critical thinking is a prerequisite and pushing factor for critical reading, conversely, critical reading is an important way to develop critical thinking and a medium to implement critical thinking. Sun Youzhong (2019) put forward eight principles for critical thinking in English teaching, TERRIFIC: Target, Evaluate, Routinize, Reflect, Inquire, Fulfill, Integrate and Content. This principle is intended to provide strategies and ways for critical-thinking oriented English teaching design. Zhang Hong (2019) explored the relationship of teachers' subjective initiative, language ability and critical thinking ability during English

teaching reform. Li Tao & Zhang Lian(2023) carried out teaching practice to improve students' critical thinking by telling China's stories to the world in English. Mao Yanfeng(2024) proposed guiding students to develop their critical thinking skills in cross-cultural contexts and to address cross-cultural issues using critical thinking approach. He Ying et al. (2025) offered recommendations for fostering critical thinking among undergraduate students, covering aspects including curriculum design and instructional content. And so on

Research on the cultivation of college students' critical thinking is far from sufficient though it has been conducted in multiple dimensions. Limitations still remain in English teaching, including an emphasis on knowledge acquisition itself in the design of curricula and textbooks and a focus on preparing for exams, questions raised in teaching procedure are not well designed to stimulate students' critical thinking effectively, and, additionally, the limited critical thinking of teachers themselves, among others. The Embodied-Cognitive View of language advocates that teachers adopt an embodied-cognitive language teaching methodology, guiding students to explore the underlying principles of language production and facilitating their improvement from low-level comprehension and memorization to higher-level thinking skills. Applying this view to college English teaching can effectively address the problem of "critical thinking absence" and cultivate high-quality professionals equipped with critical thinking and innovative abilities.

### **3. The Embodied-Cognitive View of Language and Embodied-Cognitive Language Teaching**

A view of language refers to people's overall perspective and fundamental opinions of language, which reflects their understanding of the nature of language (Lin Zhengjun & Zhang Yu, 2020). With the rise and development of cognitive science, linguists such as Lakoff, building upon their critique of Chomsky's innatist view of language, established Cognitive Linguistics, which emphasizes the embodied nature and cognitive properties of language and "examines language holistically within the broader scope of society, function, cognition, and pragmatics" (Wang Yin, 2021: 7). Cognitive Linguistics has provided comparatively reasonable explanations for the nature of language as well as for linguistic form and meaning. However, Cognitive Linguistics (CL), having undergone nearly half a century's development, has attracted attention to its shortcomings. Dąbrowska (2016), in her paper *"Cognitive Linguistics' Seven Deadly Sins"* published in Cognitive Linguistics, identified seven major "deadly sins" of CL. Wang Yin et al. (2024) summarized the limitations of Experientialism and Cognitive Linguistics, and commented that although they cover the most philosophical theories among various linguistic theories, their theoretical vision is still not broad enough. They pointed out that in discussing the unconscious nature of thought and the metaphorical nature of concepts, Experientialism and CL fail to address the "irrationality" raised in postmodern philosophy. In view of these limitations and following the philosophy of "integrating literature, history, and philosophy in developing the New Liberal Arts," Wang Yin and his team nativized Experientialism and CL into "Embodied-Cognitive Philosophy" and "Embodied-Cognitive Linguistics" (ECL), respectively. This nativization is intended to highlight the

Marxist principles of "materialism" and "humanism," and the latest insights from postmodern philosophy as well. This has proven to be reasonable in critiquing the linguistic theories of Saussure and Chomsky, which are grounded in idealist philosophy along with their preference to "study language in isolation", a non-humanistic orientation. Embodied-Cognitive Linguistics represents both an inheritance and a development of western Cognitive Linguistics, and serves as a localized adaptation of western Cognitive Linguistics within Chinese context. According to Wang Yin, ECL is not a subversion of western Cognitive Linguistics, but rather an expansion of it. The relationship between ECL and western Cognitive Linguistics may be seen as development and transcendence.

The core principle of "reality—cognition—language" is held in the Embodied-Cognitive View of language, which emphasizes the embodied-cognitive nature of language. From this point of view, language is generated on the basis of people's interactive experience (embodiment) with and cognitive processing (cognition) of the real world (Wang Yin, 2022). The objective world provides the objects of experience, while human sensory and motor systems, by receiving various stimuli from the external environment, serve as unique channels for humans to acquire perceptual experience. These concrete perceptual experiences offer the necessary materials for the brain to build conceptual structures (semantic structures). By way of their unique bodily-spatial structural experience, humans develop various concepts regarding basic spatial relations: for instance, the experience of upright walking gives rise to the concepts of "verticality and balance," and the experience of eyes looking forward, the concepts of "front and back." Such experiences provide the source of the most fundamental meanings in language and establish the experiential basis for the emergence of language (Lin Zhengjun, 2022). Embodied cognition is the foundation for the generation and development of language; language emergence and development resulted from embodied-cognitive processes. Linguistic units are pairings of meaning and form which arise from human interaction with the world.

The Embodied-Cognitive View of language boasts significant theoretical implications and offers powerful explanatory force for the generation of language. It is important and helpful in guiding language teaching too. Language teaching should not be confined to the instruction of linguistic forms, it should delve into the cognitive mechanisms and cultural backgrounds underlying language instead. Embodied-cognitive language teaching "discovers modes of embodied cognition from our physical characteristics and life experiences, and then, on this basis, explains the embodied-cognitive mechanisms that underlies language generation, enabling students to know not only what but also why" (Wang Yin, 2021: 8). By this means, students' critical thinking and disciplinary literacy can be cultivated more effectively.

### **4. The Cultivation of Critical Thinking in Embodied-cognitive Teaching Practice**

The objectives of foreign language education in the new era are not merely to enhance students' language skills, but cultivate a "Whole Person" who has cross-cultural communication ability, critical thinking ability, innovative competence and a keen sense of social responsibility (Wen xu,

Dong Ziyang, 2025). English teaching should simultaneously help cultivate and develop students' cultural awareness, thinking skills and learning abilities, instead of merely imparting linguistic knowledge such as pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary (Mei Deming, 2024:89). The main content of foreign language courses is the language itself, so cultivating students' critical thinking skills should primarily focus on language. For example, besides guiding students to examine the relationship between linguistic form and meaning, teachers should help them accurately discern the subtle differences in denotation between a foreign-language word and its Chinese equivalent and identify the varying expressive effects of different words and sentence structures within specific contexts, and so on (Pu Shi, 2022).

Different views of languages reflect different interpretations of languages, influence and guide foreign language teaching. According to the principle of Embodied-Cognitive Linguistics, human beings experience and interact with the world. Firstly, they cognitively process, categorize and conceptualize the outcomes of their experiences, then they construct knowledge schemas which are ultimately lexicalized or verbalized into linguistic form. Embodied-cognitive language teaching stresses on embodied motivation behind linguistic phenomena, which is also the explanatory objective of linguistic research. The Embodied-Cognitive View of language emphasizes that teachers guide students to explore the dynamic processes underlying language generation as well as the cognitive rationale behind grammatical rules, and boost students' progress from low-level comprehension and memorization to high-level thinking. This language teaching approach helps students master linguistic knowledge, cultivates critical thinking abilities and accelerates the development of their core competencies as well.

The text in this case study is *"Face to Face with Hurricane Camille"* adopted from *Advanced English* edited by Zhang Hanxi (2022). This text is a piece of narration in chronological order. It tells the story of the Kochaks and their friends fighting against Hurricane Camille. In August 1969, Gulfport, Mississippi, USA, was struck by the storm. Hurricane Camille's destructive force was so devastating that houses were destroyed and catastrophic flooding ravaged. In the dangerous and hopeless situation, the marooned people cared and supported one another and showed strong resilience in their efforts to save themselves. In the end, all members survived, though nearly all their possessions were lost. After the disaster, they received relief assistance and rebuilt their homes. This terrible experience brought them a deeper appreciation for the preciousness of life and family bonds. The text concludes with a quotation from Grandma Kochak that "life is above everything." which highlights the central theme. The entire text focuses on actions and has distinctive language features, making it a rare and exemplary work. The present study applies Embodied-Cognitive Iconicity and Embodied-Cognitive Metaphor to analyze *"Face to Face with Hurricane Camille"*, aiming at helping students master language knowledge, understand the rationale behind the selection of verbs, and develop critical thinking skills.

#### **4.1. Applying Embodied-Cognitive Iconicity to Cultivate Students' Critical Thinking**

In foreign language courses, the comprehension and use of language offer numerous opportunities for students to make independent judgments and to repeatedly reflect on and refine

those judgments (Pu Shi, 2022). Embodied-Cognitive Linguistics inherit Linguistic Iconicity proposed by Cognitive Linguistics. According to the core principles of Embodied-Cognitive Linguistics, "iconicity" can be defined as: linguistic symbols mirror human cognitive patterns, and cognitive patterns mirror the world to some extent (Wang Yin, 2022). The primary iconicity principles discussed by international cognitive linguists mainly include Iconicity of Distance, Iconicity of Quantity, Iconicity of Order. Besides, Wang Yin (2001) further advanced Iconicity of Markedness, Iconicity of Topic and Iconicity of Culture. Teachers can effectively apply these principles to language teaching to improve teaching effects in a "more, faster, better, and more economical" manner. When teaching *"Face to Face with Hurricane Camille"*, the teacher used the Embodied-Cognitive Iconicity to build a "question-analysis-application" teaching model. Through questions, this teaching approach stimulates students' thinking, encourages them to change from passive reception to active exploration, and develops their critical thinking skills.

##### **1) Designing heuristic questions to stimulate students' critical thinking**

In class, the teacher mainly design open-ended questions without a single correct answer, which may stimulate students' interest and encourage deeper thinking, and prompt them to use their existing knowledge for analysis and evaluation. For example, when analyzing the linguistic features of the text, the teacher asked these questions: "What's special about the way the actions are described?" or "What's special about the sentences in this text?" (guiding students to focus on surface-level linguistic phenomena, such as the choice of verbs or sentence structures); or "How would you analyze this choice of words and sentences from a linguistic perspective?" (suggesting that students apply suitable linguistic theories to analyze the linguistic forms); or "What is the advantage of this writing style?"

##### **2) Illustrating linguistic rationale to guide students in critical thinking**

After students provide their answers, the teacher conducts a detailed analysis combining relevant theories in Embodied-Cognition Linguistics with the text. Previous researches indicate an embodied correspondence between the duration of English word pronunciation and the meaning conveyed by those words. For example, when people are in a haste, their speech rate increases, and they tend to use words with short vowels or monophthongs such as "hurry" "lash"; conversely, when they are calm, they are more likely to speak slowly and use words containing diphthongs or long vowels like "leisure" and "saunter". Among these examples, words like "hurry" contains short vowels or monophthongs, producing a short, forceful pronunciation that agrees well with the nature of the described action. By contrast, words like "saunter" with diphthongs or long vowels produces a prolonged, gentle pronunciation corresponding to the meaning of its described action. This correspondence between word pronunciation duration and that of the corresponding physical action reflects the precision of English expression and vividly illustrates the close relationship between human language and bodily movements (Qin Xiugui, Huang Xingyun, 2025). This phonetic symbolism of sound representing meaning is one of the typical manifestations of Embodied Iconicity.

The full text of *"Face to Face with Hurricane Camille"* depicts the destructive force of the hurricane across six dimensions including visual, auditory and environmental

devastation etc. By these dimensions, the writer portrays the characters' actions and inner thoughts and describes a post-disaster scene filled with devastation. Such description creates a vivid, three-dimensional imagery. One distinctive feature of this writing style is the use of monosyllabic or short-vowel words, such as "lash," "skim," "scud," "yell," "dump," "shot" and "whip", etc. The pronunciation of these words is brief, concise and conveys a sense of urgency and force, portraying both the hurricane's and the characters' actions more vividly. This corresponding relationship between pronunciation and meaning enhances the imagery in the English language and provides valuable insights into a better understanding of the underlying principles. The story revolves around the Kochaks and their friends' life-and-death struggle against the hurricane, developing through three distinct stages— pre-disaster warning, in-disaster resistance, and post-disaster reconstruction—and ultimately culminates in a profound reflection on the relationship between humanity and nature. The author employs a multi-dimensional approach to construct the disaster scenario. Six core dimensions, including visual, auditory, tactile, environmental destruction, meteorological characteristics and human impact, together describe the disaster in a comprehensive, three-dimensional way (note that the examples below may involve overlapping dimensions).

In class, the teacher mainly focuses on explaining how the text shows the sound-meaning iconicity of verbs across the visual and auditory dimensions. In the visual dimension, the author uses dynamic verbs to amplify the visual impact of the disaster. In the sentence "Gray clouds **scudded** in from the Gulf on the rising wind" (the boldface marked by the author), the verb "scudded" imitates the swift movement of the dark clouds with its short syllable; in "Wind and rain **whipped** the house," the short, explosive sound of "whipped" concretely describes the intensity with which the torrential rain lashes against the house. And in "Water **lapped** across the slanting floor," the dense, continuous sound of "lapped" suggests the continuous flooding by the sea. These monosyllabic verbs, through their dual phonetic and semantic encoding, create rhythmic tension on the auditory level and construct dynamic visual imagery on the visual level, which might enable readers to have a vivid, immersive sensory experience. In the auditory dimension, the author selects explosive, monosyllabic verbs to create a sound impact. In the sentence "The wind sounded like the **roar** of a train passing a few yards away," the word "roar" mimics the deafening sound of a hurricane; in "Telephone poles and 20-inch-thick pines **cracked** like guns as the winds **snapped** them," the verb "cracked" conveys the crisp fracture of wooden structures, while "snapped" emphasizes the instantaneous destructive force of the wind; and in "Richelieu Apartments were **smashed** apart as if by a gigantic fist, and 26 people perished," the verb "smashed" evokes the heavy reverberation of a building collapsing. Through this dual encoding, combining explosive phonetic quality with destructive semantic meaning, the verbs construct an auditory wave. The wave progresses from distant to near and from faint to intense, offering readers a sensory experience of eardrum vibrating.

In Classroom teaching, the teacher focused on the visual and auditory dimensions to guide students in analyzing verb selection from the perspective of Embodied-Cognitive Iconicity. The other four dimensions are left to the students to analyze as their team work. If they have a full understanding of Iconicity, it stimulates their critical thinking.

### 3) Applying Embodied-Cognitive Iconicity to enhance students' critical thinking

After the detailed analysis of the verb selection, the teacher guide students to analyze the characteristics of sentence choice using Embodied-Cognitive Iconicity. The writer uses a number of elliptical sentences to simulate human responses and actions in urgency and danger. The following are typical ones: "Everybody on the stairs!" (with the verb "go" omitted) "Up the stairs---into the bedroom!" (with the subject and verb "Everybody go..." omitted) "Into the television room!" with the subject and verb "Everybody go..." omitted) "Count them! Nine!" (the sentence "There are altogether nine children here." is simplified as a numeral *Nine*), etc. The ellipsis of subjects and verbs in such sentences vividly reconstructs the facts that when an individual is highly stressed, the brain will extract the key information before others and compress linguistic structures to make rapid a decision and immediate response. This choice of sentence structure significantly accelerates the rhythm of the described actions, and, through its concise linguistic form, precisely creates an atmosphere of tension and urgency, enabling readers to intuitively feel the urgency and uncertainty of an individual struggling to survive under the onslaught of a hurricane. The extensive employment of ellipsis in this text is typical of Embodied-Cognitive Iconicity. The urgency and danger brought about by monosyllabic verbs and elliptical sentences perfectly echoes the title "*Face to Face with Hurricane Camille*". The text vividly portrays a highly dangerous scenario, from the Kochaks' preparations for the coming hurricane until its passing, immersing readers in the situation and evoking much concern for the survival of the Kochaks and their friends. It is only after the climax, when the hurricane weakens, the seawater recedes, and the characters are confirmed to survive, that the readers finally breathe a sigh of relief. In the whole teaching process, by employing the Embodied-Cognitive Iconicity to conduct an in-depth analysis of the text, teachers can guide students to reflect on the author's ingenious use of words and sentences, enhancing students' ability to appreciate the text.

## 4.2. Applying Embodied-Cognitive Metaphor to Cultivate Students' Critical Thinking

Metaphor is not merely a rhetorical device, but a pervasive mode of thought and a fundamental cognitive instrument; it is ubiquitous in our thinking, language, and everyday life (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980:5). Embodied-Cognitive Linguistics holds that metaphor originates from bodily experience. Everyday experience can inevitably equip us with basic metaphors that are products of the body, experience, brain, and mind, and whose meaning can only be gained through direct experience. There is generally a mapping between two cognitive domains of a metaphor: it involves projecting from a relatively familiar, concrete source domain to a relatively unfamiliar, abstract target domain according to a set of rules. In other words, by metaphor one thing is understood in terms of another. With one or more similarities between two things, people tend to draw associations between them. It is generally believed that similarity is the foundation on which metaphor arises. The similarity and mapping in a metaphor are rooted in human bodily experience, and metaphor is not creation out of nothing. Embodied-Cognitive Metaphor theory holds that language meaning does not arise out of thin air but is deeply rooted in human experience of interacting with the world (Lin Zhengjun & Zhang Cun, 2021), possessing profound

metaphorical characteristics. Because of one's limited life experiences and the constraints imposed on his cognitive abilities by time, space, and the structure of one's own sensory system, humans must rely on metaphorical mechanisms to map known conceptual domains onto unknown ones, hence expanding the boundaries of experience and knowledge through the transfer of features (Xie Shijian & Chen Shajun, 2025:120–132).

Besides Embodied-Cognitive Iconicity, skillful use of metaphors is another striking writing feature of "*Face to Face with Hurricane Camille*". In the teaching process, teachers in this research team applied the Embodied-Cognitive Metaphor to teaching practice, following the model of "cooperative learning --- in-depth analysis --- application", to cultivate students' critical thinking.

### **1) Cooperative learning and enhancing critical thinking in discussions**

Rhetoric analysis is an important part in college English teaching, which can stimulate students' critical thinking and their initiative in learning. When teaching the text, the teacher can organize group study, encourage team members to question and discuss, to enhance their critical thinking. Topics were given to each group, such as "Besides the features in choices of words and sentences, what other feature is eye-catching in this essay? What is the striking figure in this essay?" etc.

### **2) In-depth analysis and cultivating critical thinking in teaching**

After the students presented the results of their group discussions, the teacher pointed out that the clever use of metaphors throughout the text is another distinctive feature of the text, and using metaphors is a fundamental mode of human thinking as well as one of the most basic devices for language ornaments. Then the teacher analyzed several specific metaphors from the perspective of Embodied-Cognitive Linguistics. For example, in the sentence "Camille, meanwhile, had raked its way northward across Mississippi...", the phrase "raked its way" describes the hurricane's path of movement. This metaphor is based on similarities between the hurricane's track and the path a rake moves. This description makes the hurricane's attack more vivid by making an analogy. We can further explain this metaphor in the three dimensions of reality, cognition and language. In the reality dimension, Hurricane Camille swept across Mississippi, bringing torrential rainfall and affecting southwestern Virginia. This geographical and meteorological reality is the starting point for the author's perception where the storm is a mobile, continuously increasing natural force. In the cognition dimension, the reader might have personally seen the scene of a rake sweeping across the ground. The tool moves forward against resistance, its tooth-like structure leaving clear, continuous and destructive marks. By making a comparison between the hurricane's path and the "raking" action, readers might be able to understand the hurricane's persistent devastation and sweeping impact through their bodily experience. When a storm passes, everything in its path is swept away. Lastly, in the language dimension, the author uses language to represent the conceptual framework formed by cognition, and converts the noun "rake" into a verb in the sentence. More importantly, the expression "raked its way" gives the hurricane a sense of deliberate, willful movement. This metaphor skillfully describes the storm's moving track and, through the everyday action of "raking the land," changes the abstract meteorological process into a concrete, visual,

and even audible bodily experience. This description makes readers "hear" the sound of the earth being torn apart and "see" the traces of vegetation and buildings being uprooted.

### **3) Application and consolidating critical thinking in practices**

After the teacher made a detailed analysis of several metaphors in the text, students are encouraged to apply Embodied-Cognitive Metaphor theory to analyze other metaphors, to consolidate their critical thinking through practice. Another example is "From hundreds of towns and cities across the country came several million dollars in donations; household and medical supplies streamed in by plane, train and car." Students learn to analyze the metaphor in three dimensions of "reality—cognition—language". In the reality dimension, by observing or participating in after-disaster relief work, the author directly sees the rapid and continuous influx of relief supplies into the affected regions from all over the country. This scene of supplies flowing is the base for the author's understanding. The relief efforts flow continually like a current instead of arriving in a small amount sporadically, reflecting the large scale, orderliness and timeliness of post-disaster social responses. In the dimension of cognition, by using a knowledge of the characteristics of flowing water, e.g. its continuity and unstoppable nature, the author employs a metaphorical device to compare the transport of relief supplies to the flow of a "stream." This process changes the image of supplying logistics into a concrete natural phenomenon. Such description creates touching scenes in the students' minds where the imagery of a "stream" is mapped onto the continuous flow of relief supplies. This scene suggests collective societal effort and emotional commitment, evoking resonance with the human warmth after the disaster. In the language dimension, the author translates the conceptual framework of this understanding into lexical forms, converting the noun "stream" into a verb and giving it dynamic sense. This metaphor uses the concept of "flow" to produce the continuity of relief efforts into a perceptible linguistic representation. The phrase "streamed in by plane, train and car" describes the modes of transport and, through the metaphor of a "stream," portrays the influx of supplies as a spontaneous and unstoppable tide, hence enhancing the reader's intuitive grasp of the scale and efficiency of the relief work. The writer skillfully uses the everyday image of a "stream" to describe the relief scenes more vivid and evocative, allowing students to sense the warmth and solidarity of society. The word "stream" can stimulate students' associations. The continuous delivery of substantial rescue supplies to the disaster-stricken area evokes an emotional response among the students. The writer uses metaphors to make the sentences concise, vivid and striking, displaying his good command of language. Implementing embodied-cognitive language teaching, guiding students to learn the metaphorical nature underlying vocabulary and to understand the rationale behind the flexible use of word classes, enhances students' language proficiency and fosters their analogical and associative thinking skills (Qin Xiugui, Huang Xingyun, 2025).

## **5. Conclusion**

Critical thinking is an important indicator to assess the quality of college students. Embodied-Cognitive language teaching holds the Embodied-Cognitive View of language, and advocates that teachers should not merely teach linguistic knowledge and skills, they should actively guide students to

know the embodied-cognitive motivation and cognitive patterns behind language. This teaching approach eventually helps develop students' spirit of inquiry as well as their ability to identify and analyze problems. Starting from existing researches on the cultivation of critical thinking skills among college students, this study carries out teaching practices of the text *"Face to Face with Hurricane Camille"* from the Embodied-Cognitive View of language. The aim of this research is to develop students' critical thinking abilities in English teaching. The research finds that applying Embodied-Cognitive Iconicity and Embodied-Cognitive Metaphor theory in English teaching helps students gain linguistic knowledge, enhances their ability to appreciate literary works, and cultivates their critical thinking skills, which helps to cultivate high-quality, internationally competent talents.

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