Phases, Methods, and Approaches to Developing Students' Reading Skills in English

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Abstract: This article addresses the methodological issues of developing reading competence in English language lessons. It presents a detailed analysis of the stages, forms, and means of teaching reading in English classes. It is argued that teaching based on authentic texts proves to be an effective approach. However, it is also noted that the development of reading competence in English language instruction has not been sufficiently studied. The article highlights current research findings and results related to the use of authentic texts in English language education. This work is particularly useful for foreign language teachers and students specializing in foreign languages, especially in preparing their graduation qualification papers.

Keywords: English Language, Types of Speech Activity, Pre-Reading, While-Reading, Post-Reading Stages, Extensive Reading, Intensive Reading, Skimming, Scanning, Teaching Reading, Text, Reading Instruction Exercises

Introduction

In the modern education system of our country, applying innovative and advanced methods, utilizing modern pedagogical technologies, and enhancing the quality and effectiveness of education for the younger generation are among the key tasks. Critically understanding progressive processes in education, improving the content of higher education, and enhancing the quality of teaching English and culture are essential for modernizing foreign language instruction.

Despite the increased use of technical aids such as videos, multimedia, and the internet in foreign language teaching in recent years, reading remains a central component of language acquisition.

Literature Review

By the late 1980s and 1990s, reading competence began to be analyzed within the framework of an activity-based approach. G. Westhoff defined reading competence as an individual's ability to understand various types and structures of texts, relate them to broader contexts, use them purposefully, and develop reading skills for active participation

in society. J. Grzesik regarded reading competence as readiness to acquire new knowledge after reading.

I.A. Zimnyaya described four stages of semantic processing in reading activity:1) semantic forecasting; 2) oral correlation; 3) establishing semantic links among words and relationships; 4) semantic formation.

Communicative competence, which includes reading competence, is viewed in modern theory as an individual's potential to carry out speech activities. This view is supported by the works of S.L. Rubinstein, A.A. Leontiev, L.S. Vygotsky, I.A. Zimnyaya, T.A. Razuvayeva, and I.I. Zhinkin.

As Z.I. Klychnikova emphasized, reading introduces individuals to professional fields and familiarizes them with the features of their future profession in a foreign society. Through mastering the advanced ideas expressed in written texts, individuals grow intellectually, morally, and spiritually.

Methodology

The article discusses the methodology of developing reading competence in English at higher educational institutions. It describes the key stages, forms, methods, and tools used in this process. The stages and practices employed in Uzbekistan are also compared with those in more developed countries.

Result and Discussion

Exercises recommended by researchers and implemented in educational practice are classified in several ways: by text interaction stage; by type of reading; by connection to reading technique and content.

In the preparatory stage, learners complete exercises aimed at mastering lexical and grammatical units. This stage is vital for developing lexical competence and involves methods that encourage using known lexical units in speech.

There are three phases in teaching lexical material:
1) presentation
2) practice
3) application.

Exercises may be informational (introducing rules and models) or operational (integrating lexical material into speech activities). For example: "Read the text and pay attention to the highlighted word or phrase."

At the initial stage, oral, contextual, monolingual exercises are conducted under the teacher's supervision, often with visual aids. At the intermediate stage, most exercises are written and completed independently after class. The advanced stage involves enriching internal vocabulary and understanding new meanings with less conscious effort.

Grammatical exercises during reading include: identifying grammar phenomena in texts; finding missing grammatical elements; distinguishing between similar grammatical forms; comprehending texts using newly learned grammar.

While reading, students complete tasks such as: understanding overall meaning; sentence-by-sentence reading; changing narrator or verb tense; correcting misleading statements; retelling and questioning content; creating outlines.

Post-reading exercises involve tasks such as: discussing the topic using the text; role-play based on the material; oral and written comprehension checks.

According to another classification, students engage in three types of reading: extensive (fluently reading for general understanding); intensive (careful reading for detailed understanding); scanning/skimming (selective reading for specific information).

For example: extensive reading emphasizes fluency and covers longer, coherent texts; intensive reading requires attention to detail, including translation and answering questions; scanning and skimming exercises include identifying main ideas, locating specific facts, or finding theme-related articles.

Language-focused reading exercises may include: recognizing words by spelling patterns; filling in missing letters; dictations; identifying sounds and patterns; reading from textbooks, handouts, and the board.

Information retrieval exercises involve: identifying the main idea or specific facts; clarifying meaning; drawing connections; explaining conclusions or hidden meanings.

In speech-based tasks, tools such as objects, pictures, and flannel boards can be employed. Ultimately, both linguistic (lexical, grammatical, phonological) and communicative (speaking, listening, writing, reading) competences are developed.

Three-Stage Reading Instruction Model:

1. Pre-reading: Motivates and prepares students, activates prior knowledge, and uses visuals and titles to predict content. E.A. Masliko emphasized that these tasks should not reveal content, preserving the text's novelty effect.

2. While-reading: Involves direct interaction with the text. Texts should be coherent, engaging, and supported by visuals if technical. Students complete exercises to distinguish main and secondary information by identifying semantic and lexical markers.

3. Post-reading: Focuses on comprehension checks and explanation. Tasks include summarizing, choosing related visuals, identifying new information, and reflecting on the content's relevance to future professional work.

These exercises aim to build students' ability to interpret and generalize information in both oral and written forms. Reproductive and productive tasks enhance communication skills.

Effective exercises should meet two criteria:

– address students' professional and cognitive needs;
– be sequenced logically to develop occupational reading skills.

Reading instruction should be integrated with other language skills such as writing. Texts should be selected and organized in a way that facilitates development of all four communicative competencies.

Conclusion

Teaching reading in higher education not only enhances students' professional knowledge and communicative competence in English, but also cultivates cognitive abilities like attention, memory, perception, and logical reasoning.

This study analyzed the methodology of teaching reading through three main stages: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading. It demonstrated that using interactive methods in the pre- and post-reading stages is scientifically valid.

Exercises are an inseparable part of the teaching process and support the development of various types of speech activities. They should be adapted to institutional profiles and student needs, particularly for non-philological fields. The sequence and organization of these exercises as an information-communication process should stimulate students' further learning activities.

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