



Efficient Methods of Increasing the Ability to Read Texts of Different Styles in English

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Abstract

Reading continues to be the most popular activity when learning a foreign language, which makes the study relevant. Reading is given special attention in educational institutions because, as a child grows and develops, he starts to receive a good deal of information on his own from a variety of information sources, most of which differ in terms of text volume, content, and style. Reading has a much greater impact on him now. His knowledge base is increased by his capacity to read and evaluate material written in a foreign language, such as English. Reading is not only beneficial for education; it can also be used in daily life. Examples of this include reading instructions on imported goods, the subtitles of movies and TV shows, news on social media, correspondence with friends abroad, books, and newspapers. Finding efficient methods for training non-native speakers of the target language to read texts in a variety of styles is therefore essential. This study's research hypothesis states that: methodological aspects of teaching reading texts of different styles in English should be identified; effective strategies for teaching reading texts of different styles in English should be defined and put into practice in the educational process; and skills in reading texts of different styles in a foreign language—English—should be developed more quickly and efficiently. A pedagogical experiment was carried out to provide empirical support for the hypothesis. The study employed a variety of research methods, including content analysis of methodical and scientific literature, analysis of individual teaching and learning experiences, pedagogical experiments, and statistical data processing techniques. Foreign language instructors will be motivated to implement the suggested reading strategies for the benefit of both themselves and their students by the empirical and scientific evidence provided in this paper.

Keywords: English Language; Reading Skills; Teaching Foreign Languages.

1. Introduction

The deliberate process of receiving and accepting information as well as its transmission, mediated by the language system and conditioned by the communicative context, is a crucial part of the methodology of teaching a foreign language. Reading texts is one method of passing along information that can be received and transmitted. Reading has historically been characterized as a receptive speech activity that aims to perceive and comprehend written text (Solnyshkina & Vishnyakova, 2017). According to a different interpretation of the term "reading," reading is a sophisticated analytical and synthetic activity that involves the perception and active processing of information that has been graphically encoded in accordance with the rules of a particular language (Vetrova, 2019). Reading is viewed in foreign language teaching methodologies as a way to develop speaking and writing abilities as well as a stand-alone speech activity. A foreign language learner does the following while reading a text: a) learns new words and collocations; b) memorizes sentence structures; and c) correlates each graphic symbol (a letter, syllable, or word) with its sounding.

In the end, a language learner gains a better understanding of the target language overall while learning to read texts in the foreign language. Foreign language reading is practically universal in daily life, particularly for lone readers. Reading comprehension develops far more quickly than speaking, auditory perception, or writing in a foreign language. In agreement, we contend that if appropriate techniques for teaching reading texts of various styles in English are used in English language classrooms, then proficiency in reading texts of various styles in a foreign language—English—can likewise be quickly and effectively developed. Although difficult, learning to read texts in various styles is achievable. This assertion serves as the foundation for our hypothesis, which we tested and developed a series of exercises to teach

reading fiction, non-fiction, and journalistic texts in a foreign language (English) using linguistic, phonetic, and phonics-based approaches. The educational trial yielded positive results. In addition, the paper addresses the importance of reading for both society and the individual and makes broad suggestions for teachers in high schools and colleges of education.

2. Literature Review

The effective use of multiple cognitive processes is necessary for fluent reading at appropriate comprehension levels. Certain, if not all, of these procedures must be automated since cognitive resources are limited. In order to read single words, readers must integrate the phonological, orthographic, morphological, and perceptual processes required; they also need to quickly extract semantic meaning from orthographic forms. These skills must be developed accurately and automatically. In addition, readers must decipher syntax, break down text into phrasal and intersentential formations, and use schematic activation to understand the meaning contained in the text. Reading comprehension and fluency are positively correlated, according to first-language (L1) researchers (Nathan & Stanovich, 1991). Carver (1982) provided evidence for this positive relationship by demonstrating how readers' text comprehension was lowered when reading at a restricted L1 reading rate as opposed to reading at an unrestricted rate. According to McMillion and Shaw (2016), even proficient second language learners generally read more slowly in their native tongue. The main explanations for a positive correlation between comprehension and fluency are efficient decoding and the growth of automatic word recognition abilities.

This viewpoint is predicated on the reading information processing model (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974). Lower-level processes are critical in reading development, according to empirical research. "Instructional programs that emphasize spelling-sound decoding skills result in better reading outcomes because alphabetical coding is the critical subprocess that supports fluent reading," according to Stanovich and Stanovich (1999) (Sakaeva & Baranova, 2016). Lower level processes are components that are better suited for automation rather than being straightforward or easy to understand. Fluent reading requires this automatization of lower-order skills (Alderson, 2000). Because of their limited lower-level processing abilities, many L2 learners—especially those learning a language with a different writing system—face difficulties reading even before they reach any level of fluency. Character recognition transfers very little between orthographically distinct languages. Hoover and Dwivedi (1998) used spaced-reading tasks, in which participants had to press a key to advance to the next reading segment, to demonstrate that faster L2 readers could recognize and parse words more quickly. The cognitive effort required for the two types of readers to engage in these skills clearly distinguishes proficient and poor readers from one another. Poor readers need more cognitive resources and time to identify letters, common letter groupings, word morphology, and entire words than proficient L2 readers, who can identify words automatically (Grabe, 2009). Accurate syntactic parsing is required in addition to word recognition in order to extract grammatical information and comprehend meanings at the clause level. Klauda and Guthrie (2008) discovered that syntactic processing had the strongest correlation ($r = 0.75$) with reading comprehension for L1 in general. More precisely, they discovered that when syntactic elements like word order and phrasal groups within the text are understood in the writer's intended context, the meanings of polysemous words are ascertained more quickly and effectively.

Accordingly, Grabe (2009) found a strong correlation ($r = 0.80$) between reading comprehension in an L2 context and syntactic knowledge, indicating that weaker readers have trouble deciphering the syntactic elements in written texts. However, as language learners gain the ability to parse text more fluently, "extended exposure to meaningful print" (Grabe, 2009) in texts written at an ability-appropriate level can result in more efficient processing in L2 contexts (McLean & Rouault, 2017).

3. Methodology

Various approaches to reading instruction were used in the English language classroom; consideration was given to the training level and unique qualities of each student: Phonetic/phonics-based approaches; Linguistic approaches; "Whole-word" approaches; "Pitman Alphabet" approaches; Moore approaches; Montessori approaches; Zaitsev approaches. The first approach is predicated on the alphabetic principle, which describes the correspondence between a letter's pronunciation and a group of letters. The most common words that are pronounced exactly as they are spelled are taken into account when teaching reading using the linguistic method. Visualization, or the ability to recognize whole words visually, is the fundamental tenet of the "whole-word" approach. Here, neither the sound-to-letter ratio nor letter names are taught. Word recognition as a whole is taught to students (Pitman, 1969). The "Pitman Alphabet" method is

based on an expanded 44-letter English alphabet. Every letter represents a single possible pronunciation; that is, words are read exactly as written.

It's a novel approach built on gamification. The best strategies for teaching secondary school students to read English texts in a variety of styles were chosen by the study's authors. The experiment was carried out with the intention of monitoring, developing, analyzing, and assessing the efficacy of using various methods of teaching reading different-style texts in the English language classroom in accordance with the study's predetermined objectives. For two semesters, the 7th and 8th grade students received the experimental training. There were sixty students involved in the study. There were three phases to the experiment: Experiments for determining; forming; and controlling. During the initial phase of the study, students were presented with a questionnaire to ascertain their reading motivation, abilities, and preferences. Because of this, every experiment participant preferred to read fiction in both English and their original tongue. The journalistic texts they come across every day when reading news on social media, watching TV, listening to the radio, etc., rank second best. Thirdly, the experiment participants observed the importance and utility of reading non-fiction written in an approachable and thorough language. These kinds of texts, though, appear to be too complex for pupils to read and comprehend. We created a series of exercises for texts in all three styles during the experiment's formative phase, utilizing the phonetic, linguistic, and "whole word" approaches. We tested these methods after choosing various text styles (fiction, journalism, and non-fiction) and creating tasks based on the phonetic, linguistic, and "whole-word" approaches. This procedure was carried out at the control stage and involved multiple stages: The experiment's participants were given a fresh printed text every two weeks with no assignments. The students were given two minutes to get acquainted with the text before reading it. The instructor evaluated the pupils' reading abilities.

4. Results

The following outcomes of the experiment were found. The non-fiction text was the most difficult to understand. Ninety words was the bare minimum that the experiment participants had to read. Reading a non-fiction text in English took an average of 111 words per minute. There could be a maximum of 39 mistakes. When reading fiction texts, the experiment participants' reading abilities were at their best. The required minimum word count per minute was 106. A fiction text was read at a pace of 127 words per minute on average. Tables 1 and 2 show a comparative analysis of the findings from the evaluation of students' proficiency reading English texts written in a variety of styles.

Table 1. *The Results of the Input Test Assessing Students' Reading Skills*

Measured criteria	Fiction texts	Journalistic texts	Non-fiction texts
The maximum number of words per minute	147	169	127
The average reading speed	127	125	111
The number of mistakes	21	19	39

Table 2. *The Results of the Output test Assessing Students' Reading Skills*

Text style	The maximum number of words per minute	The average reading speed	The number of mistakes
Fiction texts (phonics-based method)	174	150	7
Fiction texts (linguistic method)	150	134	13
Fiction texts ('whole-word' method)	158	138	11
Journalistic texts (phonics-based method)	176	142	8
Journalistic texts (linguistic method)	150	134	10
Journalistic texts ('whole-word' method)	179	136	10
Non-fiction texts (phonics-based method)	153	129	18

Non-fiction texts (linguistic method)	129	115	21
Non-fiction texts ('whole-word' method)	134	119	18

The comparative analysis revealed a favorable trend in the area of study. For the students, the fiction and journalistic texts proved to be the easiest. Non-fiction texts showed the lowest indicators, even with an increase in reading speed and a decrease in errors.

Table 3. *The Calculation of the G -Criterion of Signs*

Text style	G-empirical	G-critical
Fiction texts (phonics-based method)	0	23
Fiction texts (linguistic method)	1	23
Fiction texts ('whole-word' method)	0	23
Journalistic texts (phonics-based method)	0	23
Journalistic texts (linguistic method)	0	23
Journalistic texts ('whole-word' method)	0	23
Non-fiction texts (phonics-based method)	0	23
Non-fiction texts (linguistic method)	7	23
Non-fiction texts ('whole-word' method)	0	23

In summary, G-empirical is less than G-critical, indicating the validity and reliability of our research hypothesis. There were sixty participants in the experiment, and the G-critical value was found to be twenty-three. Table 3 presents the findings.

5. Discussion

In this paper, we reexamined the approach to teaching reading texts in various styles in English language classrooms, emphasizing the importance of reading for language learners' daily needs and educational goals. We defined reading as an independent speech activity and explained that it helps develop both writing and speaking abilities. The following research questions in this study were resolved: What aspects of methodology go into teaching students to read texts in various styles? What strategies for teaching English language learners to read texts in various styles can be established and put into practice during the teaching process? We promoted the importance of reading instruction in English language classrooms while demonstrating the validity of the study hypothesis. In this work, we conducted a quick overview of reading instruction approaches that are acknowledged in foreign language teaching methodology in order to select the most effective ones for our investigation. These were the "whole-word," linguistic, and phonics-based approaches. The results of the experiment showed that students found non-fiction texts to be the most difficult to read and understand.

6. Conclusion

In this work, we outline and demonstrate the effectiveness of combining linguistic, phonics-based, and "the whole-word" approaches to teach foreign language learners how to read texts in a variety of styles in the target language. We also discuss the function of "reading" in society and for individuals as a methodological concept. In order to validate our hypothesis—which states that under specific circumstances, the ability to read texts in various styles in the English language can develop more quickly and effectively—we conducted a pedagogical experiment that identified methodological elements and effective strategies for teaching reading texts in various styles in English. We assessed the reading proficiency of the students both before and after they finished these exercises, and the results showed improvements: the quantity of mistakes made dropped by over 10%, and the number of words read in a minute rose. Thus, we can draw the conclusion that the data collected supports our hypothesis that teaching students to read texts in a variety of styles requires a combination of phonics-based, linguistic, and "the whole-word" approaches. The study's resources can be used as a guide by English language instructors and students.

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