

УДК 811.111(07)

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SOME ASPECTS OF TEACHING INTENSIVE READING TO EFL STUDENTS STUDYING ENGLISH AS THEIR MAJOR

Розглянуто деякі аспекти навчання вивчаючого читання студентів філологічних факультетів університетів, вивчаючих англійську мову як основну іноземну. Запропоновано низку різноманітних прийомів та вправ на трьох етапах вивчаючого читання, які мають допомагати викладачам стимулювати зацікавленість студентів у читанні літератури англійською мовою.

Ключові слова: вивчаюче читання, ознайомлювальне читання, переглядове читання, передтекстовий, текстовий та післятекстовий етапи роботи з текстом.

Рассматриваются некоторые аспекты обучения изучающему чтению студентов филологических факультетов университетов, изучающих английский язык как основной иностранный. Предлагаются разнообразные приемы и упражнения на трех этапах изучающего чтения, которые помогают преподавателям стимулировать заинтересованность студентов в чтении литературы на английском языке.

Ключевые слова: изучающее чтение, ознакомительное чтение, поисковое чтение, просмотровое чтение, предтекстовый, текстовый и послетекстовый этапы работы с текстом.

Some aspects of teaching intensive reading to EFL students studying English as their major at faculties of foreign languages in universities are considered, a broad range of techniques and activities stimulating learners' interest in reading are suggested at the three stages of reading, extensive reading, scanning, skimming, pre-reading, while-reading, post-reading.

Key words: intensive reading, extensive reading, scanning, skimming, pre-reading, while-reading, post-reading.

Reading has been the skill most emphasized in traditional foreign language teaching, and even today it is the mainstay of EFL instruction in many countries. Reading is a highly effective means of extending our command of language, so it has an important place in classrooms where language learning is the central purpose. However, students also need to learn how to read for meaning, and sometimes it is rather difficult to teach reading for both purposes at the same time or with the same text [13, p. 30]. EFL teachers, in particular those who teach students majoring in English, must be well aware of the fact that the focus in reading lessons is not only the content but also the language. They should develop their students' ability to extract the content from the language that expresses it so that they can become effective independent readers.

We read for a variety of purposes and, according to these purposes, in a variety of ways. Although reading always involves deriving meaning from the text, our purpose in reading determines the kind and the amount of meaning we look for as well as the way in which we read the text. The terms *extensive reading* and *intensive reading* are used to describe different styles of reading. Extensive reading involves rapid reading of large amounts of material or longer contents, such as a whole book, for getting the gist or the focus is generally on the meaning of what is being read, while in intensive reading setting students try to understand the text as fully as necessary and are focused

on the language rather than the text. Of course, *extensive reading* and *intensive reading* are not just two contrasting ways of reading but an infinite variety of interrelated and overlapping strategies. They are complementary and both are necessary [13, p.38]. Both approaches used for developing reading skills have important roles to play in helping learners gain fluency, first in the critical area of vocabulary and word recognition, and then in developing better reading comprehension skills. Together with *scanning* and *skimming*, important techniques of fast reading, they cannot be ignored if EFL students are to become competent readers.

Various aspects of foreign language reading, including the problem of teaching intensive and extensive reading skills as well as different reading strategies, have been discussed by a number of domestic and foreign researchers whose works are often referred to by EFL teachers in the process of their continual professional development (S.K. Folomkina [5], E. Shabaikovitch [6], O.B. Bigitch [1], G.I. Borodina, Ya.P. Bovchalyuk [2], Eu. A. Maslyko, P.K. Babinskaya [3], Ch. Nuttall [13], J. Harmer [7], L. Norman [12], R. Williams [15], S. Krashen [8], T. Lynne [10] and others. Some of them give a thorough analysis of reading skills, others make plenty of practical teaching suggestions concerning activities to use before, during and after reading a book or a story with a class. Although the list of publications devoted to the problem of teaching reading in a foreign language continues to grow yearly, there are still several aspects which require careful consideration. Intensive reading is considered to be the most typically taught method of teaching reading which has both its advantages and disadvantages. Although it focuses the learner on certain aspects of the language, it is usually done using difficult texts with many unknown words that require the learner to use a dictionary, which slows or prevents the development of fluent eye movements that are so necessary to improve learners' reading skills. Besides, there is little actual practice of reading because of the small amount of the intensive reading program text and students may not be able to read at their own level because everyone in the class is reading the same material. Another disadvantage of intensive reading is that the text may not interest the reader because it is normally chosen by the teacher, who directs and designs what kind of book or article his/her students should read in order to develop specific receptive skills. Finally, EFL students may associate this style of reading with testing and not pleasure because exercises and assessment usually follow intensive reading.

The purpose of this article is to treat some aspects of teaching intensive reading to EFL students studying English as their major at faculties of foreign languages. Without pretending to consider all the aspects of the problem, in particular using authentic and learner-authentic materials for teaching intensive reading to EFL students, the author of this article makes it her aim to rethink the way intensive reading is presented in the language classroom in order to develop a broader range of techniques and activities which are more involving for EFL students and can help them change their intensive reading habits which sometimes have nothing to do with efficient reading skills.

Reading is a complex many-sided activity involving a combination of both lexical and text-progressing skills that are widely recognized as being interactive. Two major approaches which are used for developing reading skills, known as intensive and extensive reading, have been the hot topics for many years in the field of a second and a foreign language acquisition. The aim of *extensive reading* is to encourage readers to cover a large amount of material and to gain a general understanding of what is read instead of

analyzing the detailed information. By encouraging students to choose for themselves what they read and to do so for pleasure and for general language improvement, EFL teachers help their learners build their confidence and enjoyment. In contrast, *intensive reading* is a type of slow reading that involves approaching the text under the guidance of a teacher or a task which forces the students to focus on the text. The aim is to arrive at an understanding, not only of what the text means, but of how the meaning is produced [13, 38]. *Intensive reading* practice can focus more intentionally on essential core vocabulary, patterns of text organization and types of text processing needed to adequately comprehend any text. Both *extensive* and *intensive* reading approaches have their advantages to offer at different stages of reading instruction. Thanks to *extensive reading* program, EFL students gain more confidence in reading, improve their attitude towards this communicative skill and become more motivated to read, they feel more autonomous over their own learning and improve overall language competence. However, *extensive reading* alone is not sufficient for developing reading skills and it does not play such an important role in teaching reading strategies as *intensive reading*. According to A. Paran, *intensive reading* activities are needed for four main reasons: to help learners comprehend written texts, to become more aware of text organization to better comprehend, to learn how to use and monitor effective reading strategies, and to develop general literacy skills necessary to generate productive expressions in their second language [9].

There is no denying that *intensive reading* plays a more essential role for EFL students who are more often unaware of effective reading and vocabulary learning strategies than native speakers.

Reading is an important speech skill and one of the means of communication which is often integrated with other communication skills (speaking, writing and listening) and is considered to be the basis for their further development. It is not only the aim but also a very effective means of teaching and learning a foreign language, in particular it is an efficient means of enlarging learners' real and potential vocabulary as well as an essential tool for better grammar acquisition of the target language. The crucial role of reading as a powerful means of teaching different speech habits and skills is performed by *intensive reading*. The English Language Development Curriculum for Universities, Institutes and Faculties of Foreign Languages stresses the importance of developing the four major skills, in particular reading, which is integrated with the others in the first two years and becomes relatively independent in years three, four and five [4, p.4].

According to the Curriculum, the treatment of reading skills involves reading for global understanding, followed by a deeper and more detailed comprehension of the text [4, p.11]. Combining the benefits of both more focused and intentional *intensive reading* with advantages of *extensive reading* can help EFL teachers to arrive at a more balanced and effective language program.

Needless to say, the text represents an important aspect of reading instruction. The choice of reading material in the language classroom, in particular in teaching *intensive reading*, is one of the keys to success in teaching this communication skill. However, the text itself is only one element in reading activity. Equally important is how you approach it and the activities you use with it. EFL teachers can make the process of teaching intensive reading more interesting, creative and challenging by designing suitable techniques, activities and exercises at the pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading

stages. Tasks for reading are useful for two reasons: firstly, they may provide learners with a purpose in reading and make the whole activity more interesting and effective; secondly, EFL teachers need to know how well their learners are reading, and they can get this information conveniently through looking at the results of comprehension tasks.

The *pre-reading* stage is designed to prepare learners for what they are going to read just as we are usually prepared in real life. One of the most interesting tasks developing intensive reading skills which is given before reading the text is expressing hypotheses about the content of the text. Efficient reading depends, to a large extent, on students' ability to make correct predictions, which will greatly reduce their reliance on visual information, increase their reading speed and enhance their comprehension. Students can learn to make predictions based on the title, subtitles and quotations taken from the text and their knowledge of the topic, which can trigger their interest and motivation. EFL teachers can use the non-linguistic context, such as pictures, diagrams, graphs, tables and maps to help their learners arouse their imagination. By setting guiding questions they can also increase the students' curiosity and willingness to read. Guessing the answers before reading is only one way of motivating learners to read a text. There are many others, and these can often be based on the learners' own previous experience. For example, the teachers could tell them what the topic of the text is going to be and invite them to frame their own questions or suggest vocabulary that they think will come up in the body of the text. Producing a reasonable hypothesis about the text, instead of starting with negative factors such as unfamiliar vocabulary, can help EFL teachers start a lesson on a positive note. However, dealing with new language cannot be ignored if we want our students to become competent readers. It is not necessary to teach all the new words and structures in the text before reading. Firstly, the new language can often be more easily and effectively learnt during the process of reading. Secondly, properly designed language-based tasks at this stage do not always envisage complete comprehension of the text.

The focus in intensive reading classes is not only the content but also the language. A carefully chosen text may serve as a good model or source of knowledge. Pre-reading activities prepare the learners with language to use at the while- and post-reading stages. In pre-reading EFL teachers may present some unknown words or grammatical structures to remove barriers to understanding the text. But before doing that the teacher should think over the ways of presenting new vocabulary to EFL students studying English as their major, giving preferences to guessing from context, word-building, matching, synonyms, opposites etc.

While-reading is designed to help the learners understand the text and get them "to interact with the text thoroughly and repeatedly so that they can become familiar with the words and ideas, be confident they know the sequence of events and characters; and to help them to understand and appreciate the text in more depth and detail" [14, p. 204]. Exercises that should be done at this stage provide opportunities and motivation for repeated purposeful interaction with the text. They are connected with reading and rereading of the whole text and its parts to determine its gist, to search for specific pieces of information and establish logical connection between separate facts. In this case the techniques of *scanning* and *skimming* are widely used. *Scanning* is a useful skill to locate a specific item of information that we need, such as a date, a figure or a name

[11, p.184], while in *skimming* we try to get the general overall ideas of the whole text. "The key to *skimming* is to know where to find the main ideas of different paragraphs, and to be able to synthesize them into an organic whole by way of generalization" [11, p.185]. These valuable reading strategies enable the reader to select parts of the text that are worth spending time on, in particular those which the students did not understand and need to be interpreted or discussed later. The most interesting exercises that can be done at this stage are as follows:

1. Check your predictions about the text while reading.
2. Take notes and underline all the important words and ideas.
3. Find evidence in the text to support the following statements.
4. Glance rapidly through the text and say which of the following statements *True (T)* or *False (F)*.
5. Look through the text and find English equivalents for the following words.

At the *post-reading stage* EFL teachers can check their learners' comprehension of the text by means of multiple-choice tests, true/false questions or comprehension questions. Intensive reading exercises at this stage are aimed at understanding the factual information of the text. Last but not least, this stage is to help the learners to connect what they have read with their own ideas and experience, just as we often do in real life and, perhaps, to move fluently from reading to speaking or writing as follow-up to reading activities. The work to be done at this stage may include some of the following: eliciting a personal response from the readers; linking the content with the readers' experience; drawing comparisons or contrasts between facts and ideas in the text; discussing or evaluating characters, ideas and arguments; speculating about what had happened before or would happen after the story [13, p.167]. The final part of *post-reading* is report-back session and final discussion when reading has been completed. It starts in small groups and ends in whole class discussion. It is essential that EFL teachers develop their learners' high-level skills, such as evaluation and appreciation. Students not only have to thoroughly understand what they have read, they also have to analyze it in order to form their own opinions and judgements. "To evaluate, the reader has to read critically. And the essence of critical reading is to consider what, why, and for whom the author has written. That is to say, the reader has to determine the author's purpose, consider his intended audience, recognize his strengths and weaknesses.... To appreciate the reader has to understand the author's tone and attitude, to recognize his literary devices such as the use of figures of speech, to identify his characteristic style, and to see his humor, satire, and irony" [11, p. 186].

To sum up, well-organized work with a reading text helps learners to exploit it to the full in order to achieve the most important purposes in reading and, what is more, to make the process of reading both interesting and useful. The task of EFL teachers is to use a variety of teaching methods and activities in order to stimulate students' interest and motivation, and make an intensive reading class a pleasurable and positive experience. A wide and promising area of future research might be the problem of the choice of reading material for intensive reading classes, in particular the problem of using authentic and learner-authentic materials in teaching literature in the language classroom.

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Надійшла до редколегії 07.11.2013

УДК 378:811.111

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НАВЧАННЯ ДРУГОЇ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ МОВИ (АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ) З ОПОРОЮ НА ПЕРШУ (НІМЕЦЬКУ) НА ФАКУЛЬТЕТАХ ІНОЗЕМНИХ МОВ

Метою статті є аналіз та розробка моделі навчання ІМ-2 (англійської) з опорою на ІМ-1 (німецьку), при якому активізуються дві іноземні мови, які вивчаються, і яка б давала студентам можливість вивчати ІМ-2 з урахуванням їх досвіду і знань з ІМ-1. Особлива увага зосереджена на підході до методики навчання лексики, так як саме на етапі вивчення лексики ІМ-2 вплив попередніх знань у ІМ-1 може бути найбільш відчутним.

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