

## READING STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS NON-PHILOLOGISTS

**Summary.** The article reveals the importance of different reading strategies implementation while teaching students non-philologists a foreign language. On the one hand, information has become one of the main values of the modern world and there is a number of up-to-date sources of information. On the other hand, reading still remains one of the basic sources of gaining knowledge. Without having good skills of reading it is impossible to participate in educational process and become a professional in any sphere of human activities. The article presents different reading strategies which can help make this process easier and faster.

**Keywords:** reading process, reading types, effective reading strategies, different techniques to extract information, information gaining source.

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## СТРАТЕГІЇ ЧИТАННЯ ДЛЯ СТУДЕНТІВ НЕФІЛОЛОГІВ

**Анотація.** Стаття присвячена важливості застосування різних стратегій читання при викладанні студентам нелінгвістам іноземної мови. З одного боку, інформація стала однією з головних цінностей сучасного світу і, відповідно, з'явилося багато нових джерел інформації, які не існували раніше. З іншого боку, не зважаючи на вищезазначене, читання і досі залишається основним джерелом отримання інформації та здобуття знань. Зрозуміло, що без розвитку гарних навичок читання та розуміння прочитаного якісний процес отримання освіти унеможлиблюється. Стаття пропонує різні типи та стратегії читання, які мають бути відомі студентам для більш легкого та швидкого процесу отримання знань. Читання вважається самостійною частиною мовленнєвої діяльності. Цей процес вимагає тривалої практики, творчості та критичного аналізу з метою більш глибокого проникнення під час процесу інтерпретації. Читання є складним пізнавальним процесом при якому відбувається декодування символів з метою отримання змісту – процес розуміння прочитаного та комунікації між читачем та текстом, який потребує застосування вже отриманих знань та досвіду та певної попередньої мовленнєвої практики. Читач використовує знання, власний досвід та певні стратегії щоб декодувати текст та зрозуміти його зміст. При відсутності вищезазначеного відбувається простий переклад кожного окремого слова, що призводить до дуже примітивного, або навіть невірною розуміння змісту прочитаного. Для того, щоб процес читання іноземною мовою був ефективним, необхідно слідувати правилам і застосовувати певні стратегії: ідентифікувати найбільш важливу інформацію, ігнорувати неважливі або незрозумілі частини тексту, які не впливають на загальне розуміння головної ідеї – визначати значущу та незначущу інформацію, використовувати ключові слова, вміти працювати зі словниками, ремарками та коментарями для найбільш якісної інтерпретації тексту. Студентів необхідно навчити відрізняти мету, з якою вони читають в різних навчальних ситуаціях. Наприклад, при виконанні тестів, в яких треба заповнити пропуски відповідними граматичними формами, нерозуміння деяких слів не є перешкодою для виконання завдання. Це нерозуміння не має стати джерелом розгубленості та відмови від виконання завдання, як це інколи відбувається під час тестування. Навпаки, при вивченні текстів професійного спрямування невірне тлумачення або навіть ігнорування ключових слів призводить до неякісного розуміння головної ідеї та змісту в цілому. Застосування відповідних стратегій читання є запорукою уникнення подібних ситуацій.

**Ключові слова:** процес читання, типи читання, стратегії ефективного читання, різні техніки здобуття інформації, джерело отримання інформації.

**Actuality of the study.** Today's modern life requires educated people who are able to decide professional problems as effectively as possible. Thus, gaining the necessary knowledge has become crucially important. Irrespective of a number of sources of gaining knowledge reading still remains one of the main ways of obtaining information. Without good reading skills it is impossible to do almost anything – those students who do not possess such skills are unable to complete any task properly because they have problems with reading comprehension. Using any visual aids and audio-books cannot substitute ability to read and understand the text. This is one of the basic skills which should be developed in any student, it is paid great attention to when a child has to be prepared to join the process of education. Unfortunately, practice shows that many students turn out to be unprepared in this activity and have to get further development of such skills because they have not been

developed properly and need further mastering. The article suggests some aspects of developing reading strategies.

**Analysis of publications.** Reading is the process of understanding a written text. It is a complex activity in which both perception and thought are involved. According to F. Grellet [4] reading consists of two related processes: word recognition and comprehension. Comprehension is the process of making sense of words, sentences and connected text. Readers typically need background knowledge, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, experience with a text and other strategies to help them understand a written text. As reading is one of the main sources of gaining information (along with ear channel) and plays a great role in mastering a second language, its role in learning a foreign language shouldn't be underestimated. In order to communicate effectively, learners must understand what is being said. To function successfully with a target language,

learners depend on their ability to comprehend the spoken and written word. Empirical studies have identified a positive relationship between listening ability and language acquisition as well as between reading ability and language acquisition.

Traditionally, the purpose of learning to read in a language has been to have access to the literature written in that language. This approach assumes that students learn to read a language by studying its vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structure without which reading cannot aim at its goal. On the other hand, as a source of learning, reading can, in its turn, brush up previously learned vocabulary and grammar and it can encourage students to continue learning and become not only the source of getting information and knowledge, but also a source of enjoyment. Reading is an activity with a purpose. A person may read in order to gain information or verify his/her existing knowledge, or in order to criticize a writer's ideas or writing style. A person may also read for enjoyment, or to enhance knowledge of the language being read. The purpose of reading determines the reader's selection of texts.

**The main body.** Reading can be considered an independent kind of speech activity. This process requires continuous practice, creativity and critical analysis to promote deep exploration during interpretation [3]. It is a complex cognitive process which implies decoding symbols in order to get the meaning – the process of reading comprehension. It is the process of communication between the reader and the text which is backed with the reader's previous knowledge, experience and language practice. The text presents letters, words, sentences, and paragraphs that encode meaning. The reader uses knowledge, skills, and strategies to determine what that meaning is. It also requires creativity and critical analysis in order to avoid a mere word after word decoding which may often lead to a very primitive or even wrong understanding of the meaning. To read effectively in a foreign language it is necessary to follow some rules and use some strategies such as: to identify the most important information, to ignore the unknown part of the text which is not essential for general understanding of the main idea – identify relevant and non-relevant information, to use key words, to be able to work with a dictionary, footnotes and comments in the text, to interpret and transform the text to the native language [2]. Reading comprehension is much more than decoding. Reading comprehension results when the reader knows which skills and strategies are appropriate for the type of text, and understands how to apply them to accomplish the reading purpose.

**Emphasizing the urgent problems.** Reading in a foreign language differs from reading in one's mother-tongue. If the foreign language learners are poor readers in their mother-tongue, we can definitely expect them to be unable to read efficiently in the foreign language. But if they are good readers in their mother-tongue, it is a proper reason to expect them to transfer their reading strategies to the foreign language automatically. Unfortunately, this doesn't always happen. It is always a controversial issue whether students should read out-loud or silently in class. Our practice shows that

students who read some words or parts of the text incorrectly tend to decode and understand them incorrectly, so for some period of time until the teacher is sure everybody can understand correctly, it is a necessary measure. The teacher should predict beforehand the possible difficulties and translate with students only some parts of the text. Of course, good reading practicing their mother tongue is of great help, it insures quicker gaining good reading skills in a foreign language.

**The aim of the article.** The main aim of the article is to study the main strategies of reading, distinguish the main obstacles and drawbacks in teaching students non-philologists reading comprehension skills and find out the ways to avoid possible mistakes and make the process of learning more productive. The article studies the basic types of reading strategies and suggests typical situations in which they may be implemented.

The ability to read and understand a difficult text can prove a student that he/she has good progress and achieved a high level of mastering the language; it gives confidence and desire to move to the next higher level [5]. In our opinion students should be aware of the main types of reading which they have to implement in different learning situations. They are scanning (reading with the idea to understand the main information), skimming (reading with the purpose to focus on the theme) and reading for detail (to understand the information completely) [4]. Naturally, every teacher tends to desire the most complete understanding of what is read, but it may be not necessary in some cases. It is the most widespread mistake to strive for complete understanding of every text being read. This purpose may lead to bad results of writing a test in which the task is to find a mistake in grammar, which has become a popular task in modern tests. Very often the sentences given in the task are difficult to understand but it is quite possible to distinguish a mistake without complete understanding. Students should be taught to focus on grammar itself even if they don't understand some words in a sentence. The main teacher's task is to prepare them not to be at a loss in such a situation, but to try to do the task successfully, which implies some pre-reading psychological preparation.

The same may be said about the task in which students have to insert parts of the text into the gaps. Of course, in ideal they should understand the text, but they should also realise that if they don't understand some parts of the text without gaps, it can't prevent them from doing the task correctly using skimming for these parts of the text not to lose the main idea, because it may be important to complete all the task. Also, students should be taught to read the extracted parts of the text before reading the whole text even if they are given after the text (which often happens), because while reading they may understand where to insert some of them sometimes just looking at grammar forms. With those parts creating problems students should be ready to use reading for detail, because without complete understanding of the text its impossible to find the right place for them. Still, such reading strategy can help save time and avoid nervousness while doing tests. As tests are an important part of educational process, students should learn read-

ing strategies to do the tasks properly. Of course, there are a lot of situations in which reading for detail is essential. In case of professional English study when students analyse texts connected with their future profession (for example psychologists of the third year study the text about human brain and its parts) every detail may be of great importance and students should be taught to work with different types of dictionaries. Here another typical mistake takes place when some students do not translate some basic or key words without which it is impossible to get complete information. For example, reading and analysing the text about types of human temperament some students-psychologists didn't translate some typical characteristics and couldn't answer the questions in after-reading discussion properly. It showed them that they shouldn't neglect translating words without which they may lose the major information. Of course, the teacher should prevent such situations giving pre-reading tasks which help students to focus on the main facts. But sometimes it is also useful for students to appear in a situation of failure to understand that only thorough work with text may lead to gaining professional knowledge.

Using high-level professional topical texts can be the way to teach effective reading skills, as students may know a lot of professional terms and even be familiar with the topic itself, which makes the process of reading much easier. It may also become the base for a further professional discussion and spontaneous speaking skills development. For example, with students-historians reading of the texts about Ancient Greece great buildings or about Pyramids of Egypt always causes the desire to read more and to discuss the material with using the knowledge received at professional classes or gained by themselves. For students of computer science department it is always encouraging to read about the possible future development of artificial intelligence and its relationships with humans – they always willingly use additional information about positive and negative tendencies in this field of knowledge. One of the types of after-reading tasks is to find the corresponding additional information, to be able to compare it with the basic text and to be able to discuss with groupmates.

The last step is to make some state phrases and words from the text the students' active every day vocabulary. They should realise that some words and phrases make up their so-called passive vocabulary – the words which they can understand while reading but may not recollect while speaking, which shouldn't discourage them – it is quite a normal process – nobody remembers all the words. But the progress happens when they realise what exactly is essential and memorize it while reading, doing the tasks and discussing. In such a way their vocabulary can be enriched and it becomes possible to develop their communicative skills further. It is usually the teacher's task to draw students attention to the most essential parts of the text, though students may also often decide for themselves, which can be of frequent usage in their professional and sometimes non-professional activities.

The idea of home reading is not included into the course of English for students non-philologists, but it may become one of integral parts of mastering

the language. Of course, it should not be regarded as overloading by the students in order not to cause resentment in them. Only step by step involvement in reading of the texts which can cause interest in students provides successful achievement in this activity. For example, reading of some extracts with the effect 'to be continued' from the novel 'The Origin' by Dan Brown while learning the topic 'Artificial Intelligence' with the students of computer science department was extremely productive because the students were eager to know what happened next and prepared some material on their own initiative to be able to participate in the classroom discussion. Such reading stimulates imagination on the one hand and creative thinking on the other. Each of them tried to prove his idea using some information from the text and at the same time expressed their own thoughts showing agreement or disagreement with the author. The majority of students had regarded only the positive influence of using artificial intelligence in people's life in the nearest future. The book made them think of the opposite possibility when the AI considered itself whether to take away somebody's life, to sacrifice it trying to make the situation better according to its point of view. Coming to the conclusion that human life is the main value and should be saved in any situation, that it is immoral to take the right to decide whose life can be sacrificed in the name of some idea was very important for the students who do not discuss ethical problems at their other lessons, but on whom the decision what ideas to put into the artificial intelligence will depend very soon. So, reading can serve the main aim – to make future specialists in computer sphere think not only of the technical side of the matter, but of moral and ethical responsibility of those who implement such technologies into our life. In our opinion, it is the most essential task which reading comprehension can solve while learning the language.

**Conclusion and suggestions.** Students usually need more reading practice in order to become efficient readers in the foreign language. Using a difficult real life English text in class can be a productive way of training students to use special reading skills such as ignoring the parts that are not important, guessing the meaning of words from context, skimming and scanning quickly for the important parts, reading for general understanding, and increasing reading speed. In such a case reading can become a source of self-education, when a student can use reading skills to get the necessary professional information, information about the world and so on.

All the above mentioned proves that reading strategies help students in successful study. Students should be able to distinguish different reading situations and types of tasks and realise in what situation which type of reading must be used not to make mistakes, to do the reading tasks properly, to get as much information as possible and to avoid unnecessary nervousness. The teacher's duty is to teach how to work out the necessary reading strategies in reading process. Also, reading comprehension makes the basis for further educational activities including expressing opinions, searching for additional corresponding information, writing essays and compositions and the like.

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