

водит к интерференции, т.е. многостороннему влиянию, в том числе и в области семантики, средств родного языка на изучаемый язык, что создает большие трудности для активного овладения последним» [3; 164]. Таким образом, использование электронных толковых словарей как на занятии, так и при самостоятельном изучении иностранного языка не только позволяет по-новому вводить новый материал, влияет на качество усвоения учебного материала и т.д., но также способствует формированию у студентов беспереводного типа мышления.

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COMMUNICATIVE TASKS FOR TEACHING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE READING WITH A PURPOSE

The article deals with the text- and reader-based factors of teaching university students in reading English texts with a purpose. The author shows the discourse-pragmatic intention of English texts and properly capture organizational requirements of students' reading purpose practice through communicative assignments at all levels of foreign language learning process.

Keywords: reading purpose, the concept of task, non-academic reading, real-world reading, purpose-driven interest, pragmatic or language-in-use approach.

I. Introduction. Describing reading proficiency of an individual reader which he or she experiences in reading a particular text, researchers have recognized the importance of both text- and reader-based factors. A reader reads a text with a definite purpose or reason and approaches the information with a particular goal in mind,

whether that goal involves learning or entertainment. Both, real-world and classroom situations purpose involves the reader's motivation, interest, and manner of reading.

II. Aim. This article deals with the factor of purpose, as determined by the reader or the instructional context. Reading in the real world is defined by researchers as non-academic reading, or reading outside the classroom. Real-world reading is performed for any number of reasons, and the nature of reading varies according to the reader's purpose and situation. These factors inevitably determine the reader's approach to the information of the text, the amount of attention paid, the time spent, as well as what features or ideas of the text are focused on.

Reading for information or reading to learn is pursued to gain insight and may range from the scanning of documents and the reading of letters to in-depth reading of articles or books the readers are interested in.

III. Results. In second language acquisition research and theory, Krashen has consistently argued that reading with a purpose is an important source of comprehensible input for acquisition. The only requirement is that the information or main idea should «be comprehensible and the topic be something the student is genuinely interested in, that he would read in his first language»[1, 164]. To encourage light reading in a foreign language, foreign language teachers should provide a resource where students can browse and take out reading materials of interest. At the high school levels, it is possible to incorporate some free outside reading into course syllabi. Over the course of a semester, students are asked to perform one self-selected reading on the problem and report on it in oral or written form. While the reporting task turns the activity into work, the important element of self-selection is still retained. Alternatively, students can work with magazines and newspapers in the classroom or library to create a portfolio of texts on a topic of interest. In the portfolio students identify the source of information and briefly summarize the gist of each text. In addition, they write a paragraph explaining their interest in the topic, reactions to certain problems of the articles, and questions they may have. The teacher responds in writing with comments on both the topic itself and the text collection.

Considering reading to be valuable input for language acquisition, teachers can take advantage of the fact that many students in elementary courses are capable of reading far beyond the level they speak at. Strong language learners and good readers can benefit from reading longer, narrative texts at earlier levels of learning. As a supplement to introductory textbooks, foreign language teachers should assign universally known facts in longer authentic texts on topics with which intermediate-level students are already familiar.

Wherever possible, teachers should provide students directly with choices of authentic texts according to their interest. But readers' interest in a text can certainly be a function of purpose. Educational researchers have defined several different categories of readers' interest. They refer individual or personal interest to long-standing preferences on the part of a particular reader for certain topics or related subject matter [2]. Alternatively, situational interest is referred to interest generated by situational factors,

including the text itself. Text-based situational interest is generally defined as interest that is elicited by text through topics or ideas that are of universal or archetypal appeal [3]. Reading purpose is another form of situational interest that concerns us here.

In a study that sought to determine the effect on interest and recall of reading with a particular perspective, Schraw and Dennison (1994) found that focusing readers' attention on selected text information increases what the researchers term purpose-driven interest and that text segments that are relevant to a readers' purpose are recalled better than those that are not [4]. The implications of this study for a teacher of foreign language as a classroom instructor are clear and significant. When students get a task to read a text with a particular purpose, both their reading interest and retention of text material are heightened.

Being purpose driven, reading is more interesting for students and text information is understood and recalled better by them. Readers' interest and performance can be enhanced by creating purpose of the classroom reading situations. The fact is the researchers try to define how narrowly the concept of purpose should be. In the broadest sense, even the most traditional textbook comprehension exercises provide students with the purpose of reading a text for specific information. Yet traditional comprehension questions generally address all information in the text in an undifferentiated manner. This kind of even, comprehensive coverage is well intentioned but unfortunately results in a levelling of content, as if all ideas or aspects of the text were equally important. In short, there is no reading perspective. Rarely in real-world reading do people pay equal attention to everything in a text, and exercises that lead students to approach a text in this way may well remove the important element of interest from the reading process. An alternative point of view to comprehension questions that often accompany textbook dialogues or cultural texts is to have students write a list either of places, events, or even facts based on the text the students find interesting. Such activity depends on the content.

Reading with a purpose means approaching texts with a specific goal. When possible, students can be asked to read a text from a specific point of view, depending on what the text might suggest. In the classroom, students can be given reasons to read that approximate their purposes in a variety of real-world situations. They can read ads for apartments to find one that fits a particular set of requirements, or respond to a written invitation.

Beyond these comprehension exercise types, purposeful reading can also be part of whole communicative tasks in the foreign language classroom. Nunan (1993) defines a communicative task as a «piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on meaning rather than form» [5, 59]. Strictly speaking, such task activities have a non-linguistic goal. The idea is to get something done via the language, to read a text and do something with the information [6]. Whole tasks should be communicative and involve performance of reading in conjunction with other skills: listening, speaking, or writing. For example, students might read a num-

ber of texts on the topic «Travelling», such as brochures, timetables, or maps, and listen to radio weather or traffic reports in order to carry out the larger task of deciding on the only method of transportation to use on a trip. They also have to decide whether it is necessary to go on a business trip or a trip for pleasure, or to postpone it, or, perhaps choose another, more suitable means of communication. In such an activity, each student deals with one category of information, and all students have a good possibility to communicate their information to one another to come up with the best plan for the trip. Naturally arguments are required.

Still other kinds of communicative tasks may include activities that would not actually occur in real-world situations. For example, a classroom reading task might engage students in reconstructing a text that has been cut up into paragraphs, or, paraphrasing definite grammar constructions, or, finishing a story, or, in pairs, reading slightly different versions of the same story and discovering differences through speech alone. These tasks, while not real world, are still communicative; they focus on understanding the information of the given text to get something done.

A task approach conveys to students the value of fluent and efficient reading, because reading for a specific purpose means reading texts in different ways at different speeds, depending on the information needed and the task to be carried out. Another advantage of tasks is that students can work with authentic texts from the start. A complex, unedited text can be made accessible by adjusting the level of difficulty of the task. The same text is recommended to be used at different points during a semester, each time with a different task or purpose. The experts say, rereading the same text with a different purpose, students have a possibility to derive a sense of accomplishment from their progressively greater comprehension and more extended use of the text.

Recent reading research points to the benefits of working with texts for the purpose of drawing students' attention to formal features of written language as well [6]. A communicative or task approach is required to be combined with analysis of text structure and linguistic features of a text. However, most specialists are sure that teachers should focus on textual messages first. We absolutely share this point of view. If an individual student cannot perform a task successfully due to misreading of a text, the student will need to reread problematic segments and attend more closely to the text structure. If many students in a class experience difficulty with certain syntactical structures or forms of text organization, the teacher should conduct a reading lesson that targets those areas.

Students should be led from considerations of content to those of form in a natural manner. In the domain of rhetoric, for example, students can be asked to identify the discourse features of the text that contribute to its persuasiveness. It is possible to focus them on pragmatic issues of register and audience and examine the lexical networks that connect text segments and the use of syntax to establish topic. This sort of textual analysis is a different kind of activity from reading to perform a communicative task. Both uses of text are beneficial, but it is necessary for teachers and students

to distinguish between them. It is also important that a text should be apprehended first in terms of meaning and reader response.

In advanced-level courses, such as film studies or special topics in scientific literature, reading plays a significant role. The focus is on academic tasks, such as presenting a report or writing a paper. Or students might study some texts describing the main psychological problems of our society and then arrange a conference involving the decisions of up-today problems in order to avoid terrible consequences.

In discussions of the concept of critical or scientific literacy, reading and interpretation have been defined by a variety of researchers as being able to talk about a text, which in turn means being able to participate in a «conversation of readers» [7]. According to this explanation, literacy is both a social and cognitive process.

Importantly, Graff situates reading within the larger communicative context of academic discourse and emphasizes the primacy of context over text. He argues that reading a literary text in order to support or counter a particular critical argument can engage students who otherwise would not know what to think or say about what they are reading. Thus, in literature courses, an important sense of purpose can be created by asking students to read from a particular angle or with a particular argument in mind.

Literacy tasks for upper-level coursework should afford diverse opportunities for interaction among students: In a discussion of academic discourse and collaborative learning, Bruffee (1984) borrows the Vygotskian concept of thought as internalized conversation to argue for «engaging students in conversation among themselves at as many points in both the writing and the reading process as possible», in short, for pedagogical practice that acknowledges and reflects the social and inter-textual nature of literacy and knowledge. This means less emphasis on reading as a solitary activity and more on reading and discussing [8].

A reader's background knowledge with respect to text topic and genre is recognized as a significant factor in text comprehension. Textbooks and pedagogical practice now routinely include pre-reading activities with authentic texts or other reading selections. Interestingly, a benefit of such activities is the focus or purpose for reading that they can provide. As the result, at the advanced level the value of pre-reading work for both comprehension and interest does not diminish. In literature courses, for example, writing and discussion can serve equally well as an entry into a whole text or text segment. Pre-reading discussion can focus on a critical argument or controversy surrounding interpretation of a text. Moreover, discussion or writing tasks can elicit students' personal views or previous readings on a topic or their expectations with respect to text content or point of view. Prior to the reading, they can articulate their expectations about what facts will be highlighted and what perspective or definite stance, if any, the articles will reflect. Discussing these issues before rather than after reading provides focus, which creates interest in the information of the texts.

As preparation for reading authentic foreign language texts on a scientific topic, students can engage in peer reading and debate. In this activity, the teacher provides students with a topic for debate formulated in terms of a specific question. Each stu-

dent prepares a short position statement on the topic either orally or in a written form, making an argument that may or may not represent the view of other students. In groups, students are engaged in reading through and discussing all statements, culling what they believe to be the best arguments for and against each side of the debate. The groups then compare their results. Here, prior discussion of the arguments provides again a focal point for reading.

Writing is a particularly effective form of pre-reading activity of students. It prompts readers to reflect on what they are about to read. Writing activities foster the development of a sense of authorship, which certainly helps make students more critical readers. An effective way to promote active response to text information is through assignment of reading journals. In these, students write entries prior to each reading assignment. In addition to writing their reactions to information already read, they are encouraged to write prospectively, anticipating informative line or author's idea and formulating their attitude to what they are about to read. Then journal entries are handed in to the teacher and exchanged with other students. No doubt, such activity forms the basis for discussion or for other, more developed writing tasks.

Ideally, it is the intended use of texts by foreign language learners that should drive reading instruction across the curriculum. In high schools learners' needs may range from fulfilling a language requirement to language use in travel and career or study abroad or general interest in language and culture. Because of this wide range, it is often difficult to base instruction on a well-defined set of learners' future needs or target tasks; however, it is possible to place increased emphasis on learners' potential uses of text. Such a focus might prompt re-evaluation of a variety of foreign language courses and programs, ranging from foreign language across the curriculum to reading requirements for M.A. and Ph.D. candidates in the humanities.

A functional approach to advanced foreign language teaching in particular should be designed to encourage learners to reflect on the characteristics and use of certain linguistic structures, and especially on their pragmatic functions in discourse. Consequently, an important didactic implication is the need for awareness raising as to both the basic functional characteristics of discourse and information structure, such as the information principle, the principles of end-focus and end-weight in English, as well as the specific linguistic means of information highlighting in spoken and written English. Similar proposals can be found in the work of Rowley-Jolivet and Carter-Thomas who argue that «it would also seem necessary to adopt a more discoursal approach to the teaching of syntax of English for academic and/or specific purposes, to acquire the pragmatic competence needed to manipulate information structure in genre-specific ways. An important first step is one of consciousness-raising and would involve heightening learners' awareness [...]» [9, 60].

At the advanced level teaching it is required to adopt a function-to-form line of presentation, sharpening students' awareness of the fundamentals of information structure, and introducing students to and familiarizing them with the various phonological, lexico-grammatical, and syntactic means that can be used to highlight infor-

mation. This could involve a contrastive perspective and address some formal and functional characteristics that the native language and English, as a foreign language, share, and those in which they differ. Such an approach to teaching evidently could result in an improved situation in which the students, given the appropriate contextual setting, would no longer perceive such 'deviant' word order constructions as odd, stylistically awkward or even ill-formed.

Such pragmatic or language-in-use approach helps students understand that the focusing devices that are available and used in English texts have a discourse-pragmatic intention. In other words: The use of the focusing devices is pragmatically motivated thanks to their certain pragmatic function. In practice it is not natural for native speakers to use these means randomly or for reasons of mere (lexical) variation, but they choose from among several options to serve their communicative needs. The issue of Ward, Birmer and Huddleston explains that «the choice of the non-canonical constructions may be motivated by stylistic considerations, by the need for variety: a discourse consisting of clauses all of which follow the default pattern would likely be perceived as tiresome and repetitive» [10, 1372]. Such point of view is shared by Blyth (2000), Katz (2000) and Kerr (2002) whose articles explicitly address pedagogical and teaching aspects of functional principles of language use. The paper by Blyth does not only acknowledge the importance of the teaching of pragmatically-conditioned word-order constructions within a discourse-oriented approach to grammar (or discourse grammar), but also provides with a variety of techniques for teaching these constructions with the help of methods from three different fields: 1) Focus on Form methodology, which recommends to focus learners' attention on forms within a meaningful context, 2) Discourse analysis, 3) Corpus linguistics. Blyth notes that the first technique, focusing on Form activities creates «the ideal conditions for grammar learning, when a student, having a communicative need, can fulfil it only by a particular linguistic form, which becomes communicatively salient» [11, 192]. Among others, he proposes to base communicative tasks on contradicting misinformation that serves to elicit cleft constructions [11, 204f.]. Techniques from the field of discourse analyses may include pragmatically odd written texts [11, 207 ff.].

IV. Conclusion. To sum up the information given above, at all levels of foreign language learning process, providing students a reason to pick up a text, also gives them a way to read it. In elementary and intermediate classes, whole real-world tasks that offer other kinds of communicative purpose convey to students the value of reading for message. In advanced-level courses, the principle of reading with a purpose means rethinking the conventional «read and discuss» approach to literary and cultural texts. It means that some of the classroom discussion that has traditionally taken place after reading would be better placed before, so students have *something to read for*. Reading with a perspective or reading to decide for or against a particular interpretation not only creates interest in the text but also provides students with something interesting to say after reading. Just as important, at all levels of foreign language coursework, purposeful reading can enhance interest and recall on the part of

students. It is the concept of purpose which provides a useful organizing principle for the coordination of reading instruction across the curriculum.

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