

## Principles of Text Selection in Teaching Foreign Languages

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**Abstract:** Reading is a communicative activity aimed at obtaining information contained in a written text, a method of communication through text. Reading plays a huge cognitive and educational role; it cultivates a person's feelings and will, and contributes to the formation of personality in people's lives. The need for reading for a specialist is obvious, since most of the information comes through printed materials. The article discusses the principles of text selection in teaching foreign languages.

**Keywords:** teaching reading, requirements, selection of material, the content of texts.

The effectiveness of teaching reading largely depends on the correct selection and organization of reading material. To properly solve this problem, a number of factors must be taken into account.

First, it is necessary to take into account the dynamics of the development of reading skills. During the period of formation of mechanisms for voicing a new code for a student, it is advisable to offer isolated words, combinations of words, sentences, groups of sentences related in meaning for reading. The selection of material at this stage is carried out according to simple criteria: vocabulary is selected that has already been studied in oral speech and contains letter combinations, the sound decoding of which is trained at this stage of training. Such reading cannot yet be called reading in the true sense of the word, since reading is the perception and semantic processing of a coherent text. However, this stage is a necessary step in mastering reading skills [3, 4 p.66].

Subsequently, coherent texts are selected according to other criteria. They can be divided into two large groups: requirements for the content of texts and for their linguistic design.

Let us turn to the content side of the texts.

The first requirement—the cognitive value of the text—has already been partially covered. This requirement is also derived from the principle of taking into account the educational and educational potential of texts. The reading text should contribute to the replenishment of the student's factual knowledge and the formation of value orientations in the student.

A mandatory requirement at any stage of learning is that the text matches the interests of students. The success of teaching reading is directly related to how significant the texts offered to them are in the eyes of students. Only in this case is it possible for interest to arise, and then a motive for activity. Interest in the content of the text is determined by the cognitive and emotional needs of the individual, which are determined, in particular, by the age of the student and depend on his intellectual and spiritual development. It is common for each age group to show interest in certain textual content. For example, fairy tales are interesting for primary school age; at the middle stage of learning, students appreciate texts based on an entertaining plot (humorous, adventure, detective, jokes, science fiction); older schoolchildren are interested in problematic texts that provide topics for reflection (about peers, moral standards, friendship, love, etc.) [1, 17, 21].

An important requirement for the content of texts should be their cultural value. The sociocultural component is mandatory in the content of teaching a foreign language. The text is one of the main means of introducing students to the culture of another people. It is quite obvious that already at the initial stage of learning, texts should educate students in the field of culture of the country of the

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language being studied: children's games, school, features of family life, etc. The sociocultural content of reading texts should be clearly focused on the age capabilities of students. At the primary and secondary stages of education, cultural topics should be primarily focused around the characteristics of the everyday life of schoolchildren and their age-related interests. This allows teenagers to be emotionally involved in the learning process and stimulate intercultural comparisons, which serve as the first step to understanding another culture. At the middle and senior stages of education, sociocultural topics may be more focused around the cultural heritage of the country of the language being studied.

Let us turn to the linguistic side of the texts. The success of reading as a speech activity depends on whether the student can concentrate on the content of the text and whether its linguistic content causes difficulties. The accessibility of the content and language of the text creates favorable conditions for the automation of reading mechanisms - correct eye movements, holistic perception of words and phrases and their recognition and understanding, increasing the coverage of what is being read, etc. Along with this, the availability of what is read in terms of language acts as a very significant factor in creating and strengthening motivation to learn a foreign language: the feeling of success gives students a sense of satisfaction and leads to the emergence of interest in learning a foreign language [7,10,13].

Along with information richness and logical-semantic structure, the linguistic features of the text are among the factors that determine reading success. When characterizing the linguistic difficulty of a text, it is customary to name two factors - its lexical and grammatical aspects.

With regard to the lexical composition of the text, attention is paid to ensuring that the presence of material unknown to the reader does not have a negative impact on the quality of the reading process. Unfamiliar material in the text affects its understanding differentially depending on the nature of the text, the number of new words, their qualitative characteristics, and the type of reading. Moreover, all these factors are realized simultaneously, and each of them can enhance or neutralize the negative effect of others on understanding. For example, text for exploratory reading may contain more unfamiliar words than text intended for learning reading. In this case, the type of reading - searching only for information of interest - compensates for the lexical complexity of the text.

Unfamiliar words included in the text may present varying degrees of difficulty for students. Therefore, students can guess some of them based on the context or on the basis of knowledge of the rules of word formation [18, 22, 24]. The presence of a certain percentage of such vocabulary, as a rule, does not complicate the reading process, provided that students master the appropriate teaching techniques. In general, in the methodology of teaching foreign languages, the following percentages of unfamiliar words in the text are recommended. For search and scanning reading, the number of unfamiliar words can reach up to 25%, taking into account words whose meaning can be guessed. For introductory reading, the percentage of unfamiliar words can be from 4 to 10%, in the latter case taking into account words whose meaning can be guessed. For a complete and accurate understanding of the text by S.K. Folomkina recommended 2-3 words per page of text (Folomkina S.K., 1987) [29].

The problem of complexity for understanding grammatical phenomena in a text is less developed. At the initial and middle stages of learning, one of the requirements for texts is learning to read using studied grammatical material; the exclusion of an argument from a text is the ability to recognize the main thesis of the text, the author's arguments and examples, opponents' counterarguments and their refutation, etc.

The problem of complexity for understanding grammatical phenomena in a text is less developed. At the initial and middle stages of learning, one of the requirements for texts is learning to read using studied grammatical material and excluding unknown grammatical structures from texts [14, p, 206].

This approach is generally followed. However, it cannot be elevated to a principle at the senior stage of education. This is due to the requirement of modern methods to select authentic texts for teaching, that is, texts that preserve all the characteristics of a natural speech work. Such characteristics include: the connection of the text with the communication situation, its substantive and formal integrity and



coherence, diversity of vocabulary, idiomaticity, expressiveness, the absence of lexical and grammatical distortions from the native language, etc [16,19, 20].

Naturally, compliance with this principle is impossible without preserving in the texts a number of authentic grammatical constructions that are widely used in the language, but for one reason or another were not included in the content of training at a certain stage.

Modern methods make it possible to preserve grammatical phenomena unknown to students in texts, the removal or replacement of which leads to a loss of authenticity in the text. Their difficulty in perception should be compensated by the development of educational compensatory techniques in students: ignoring the unknown, contextual guessing, analysis of root morphemes and formative elements, etc.

In general, when selecting texts for reading, the rule “from easy to difficult” applies. As students improve their analytical mechanisms, accumulate vocabulary, increase interest in this type of activity, master the methods of perceiving and comprehending the material, texts should become more complex in all respects, but not exceed the level of difficulty that can turn students away from the desire to read.

In terms of selecting text material, in recent years, in the methodology of teaching reading in a foreign language, the issue of the types of texts acceptable at each stage of learning has been seriously considered. In the domestic tradition, texts are distinguished: artistic, journalistic and popular science, epistolary, functional or pragmatic. The latter include a large number of types of texts created for real communication and having structural and discursive features that distinguish them from other types [23, 25, 28]. Foreign language textbooks are increasingly including these types of texts: instructions, recipes, brochures, advertising, notices, packaging and labels, tickets, questionnaires, reference books, etc.

It is recognized that it is necessary to include various types of texts in the teaching content. This position is related to the fact that types of texts have different “learning potential”: a) in terms of teaching reading; b) in terms of developing speaking and writing skills. It is known, for example, that learning search reading is easier and more natural on the basis of pragmatic texts [11, 12]. This ensures the “reality” of the communication task. Learning to read by sight is natural based on newspaper and magazine publications and Internet texts. To develop productive speaking and writing skills, it is important to know the principles of composition of various types of texts. For example, in order to learn the ability to reason and argue in speech and writing, a student must have the opportunity to observe how such texts are constructed, therefore, be able to read journalism and understand the discursive features of reasoning or argumentation [15, p.84]. Therefore, for a text-argument, this is the ability to recognize the main thesis of the text, the author’s arguments and examples, counter-arguments of opponents and their refutation, etc.

As a generalization, it should be emphasized that the system of criteria for selecting texts at all levels of education makes it possible to build a holistic, consistent content component of the educational process; the distinctive characteristics of the signs demonstrate the complication of speech-cognitive activity with an increase in the level of education at a university in accordance with the register of foreign language speech; criteria for selecting texts are used by the teacher to select the content of textbooks, which are the basis of classroom work, as well as by students in the form of methodological recommendations for working with texts in variable independent work.

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