Князева Н. А.,
Таврический национальный университет им. В. И. Вернадского, г. Симферополь

ON THE WAY TOWARDS PROFICIENT READING

У статті розглянуто види навчальної іншомовної діяльності, які є спрямованими на розвиток навичок правильного розуміння публіцистичних текстів із урахуванням регістру, узгодженості та авторського задуму й соціокультурної цінності.
Ключові слова: текст, академічне читання, розуміння, стратегії читання, навички навчання.

В статье рассматриваются виды учебной иноязычной деятельности, направленные на развитие навыков правильного понимания публицистических текстов с учетом регистра, согласования и авторского замысла, а также социокультурной ценности.
Ключевые слова: текст, академическое чтение, понимание, стратегии чтения, навыки чтения.

The article views language activities aimed at developing proper understanding of the publisistic text in the view of register, cohesion as well as the author's tone and socio-cultural value.
Key words: text, academic reading, extensive reading, engagement activities, comprehension; reading strategies, study skills.

Being a philologist in a wide sense of a word implies academic ability to understand every variety of text in the chosen language through reading and place it within the overall treasury of existing literature [1, p. 9]. In terms of literacy, socially mediated and developed, reading is admitted to belong to the group of literacy events taking place within real-life context in a community and therefore seen as an initial step in the direction of literacy development. Being involved in this process, reading is distinguished by its relevance to interpreting some textual thing as created in the course of cross cultural communication and accomplished by the language itself and some kinds of social and cultural presuppositions. Initially considered word-for-word decoding as the only way to read, it has been further on replaced by learning how to read purposefully, selectively, based on the assumption that the reader be seriously justified in its adequate comprehension from the points of view of structure, semantics, socio-cultural value and register.

It makes think about the fact that the text arising in a specific social situation represents a highly combined, coherent and cohesive organization both on its structural and semantic planes. Consequently, the reader is involved in a reconstruction of context through an analysis of its content set up by the variables, such as: genre; register; verbally presented events as topical points; the author's perspective in terms of gist and theme; view-dependent attitudes, social and cultural evaluative stance; logical links [4].

In this respect, it should be noted that reading entails complex interactions between reader, writer and text, suggesting active engagement with the author's intentions and ideas. In other words, reading encourages a person to get engaged with what is read, gleaning information and then fitting it into certain environment so as to be able to interpret the content flexibly to suit the purpose of literacy experiences.

Apparently, pure understanding of grammar and lexicon does not fully constitute comprehension of the text: coherence and brought by the author view points based on cultural norms, beliefs, knowledge, values are essential as well. Constructed on this basis, process of reading goes beyond a simple set of strategies and is placed within some socio-cultural domain. Thus, we are coming to understanding necessity of monitoring cognition to make sure that the information presented is critically processed by the reader, being a holder of his own value system.

Consequently, reading appears to be a complex learned skill leading to a certain model of critical extensive reading focused on the ability to extract and research information from multiple sources in a range of subject areas enhancing comprehension development like interactive mental process. The model is evolved around the following strategy-related activities: engagement, comprehension and activate activities, supplied with corresponding study skills and reading strategies – which are intended to develop overall reading proficiency through corresponding reading question tasks: matching, multiple choice, true/false, gapfill, completion, summary, information gap, evaluating statements, reassembling a text [3].

Engagement and comprehension activities:

1. Making predictions. It is a mistake to begin reading without having a reason to read: reading requires a certain strategy and approach in order to comprehend content properly. Hence, initial stage is to be organized so that the reader could make inferences about genre and register peculiarities: whether it is fiction or non-fiction (with emphasis on its source, purpose, medium of communication, social, cultural, political conditions), taking into account area of its dissimilation (science, business transactions, newspaper reporting, journal articles, TV advertising, official announcements, cultural or sport events). If we think of the way how to start processing information, then the following functional domains are offered to single out: 1) general scientific entries, which deal with asserting certain points or assumptions, making prospects, arriving at certain results, explaining and defining this or that phenomenon, passing on and summing up information; 2) publicistic prose with the focus on influence on public opinion, combination of logic argumentation and emotional appeal causing a person to accept the given point of view, logically and carefully structured with use of imagery and brevity of expression.

Reading strategies: 1) Have a question in your mind about would-be topic and content. 2) Take a look at a title and subheading in order to get a rough idea about the main topic and in what subject area it could be placed. 3) Work out the meaning of the title making some guesses on purpose and function of the passage. 4) Pay attention to the way how the text is structured (number of paragraphs and headings if any), which gives you ability to predict text development.

5) Remember, headings for each section refer to what is contained and location of pieces of information. 6) Always look at bold words, illustrations, figures, tables, graphs that accompany a reading passage and contain clues to predicted information. 7) Questions given in the tasks provide valuable hints about the content. 8) Figure out relevant topical items, based on your experience.

Study skills: 1) understand how the text is structured; 2) predict text development; 3) decide whether the text is based on fact or opinion; 4) make general inferences from the text; 5) use headlines and subheadings as cues to understanding.

2. Setting up expectations about thematic formation of the text. Good reading texts can introduce interesting topics, stimulating discussion and exciting imaginative responses, in this way involving the reader's transitions in the development of text. The system of themes builds up a textual environment like presentation of states-of-affairs and covering processes, activities, relationships, participants, attendant circumstances, ascribed attributes, which are properly organized through simultaneous use of two complementary principles: constituency structure in which a larger meaning unit is directly made up of smaller units; cohesive structure or «texture», in which chains of semantic relationships unite units scattered through the text, creating semantic continuity across segmental boundaries within a text on the basis of *logical cohesion* (because of logical consistency: similarity and contrast, reason and result, condition and effect, process and circumstances of its occurrence, etc.), *temporal cohesion* (parts are grouped by when they are processed), *communicational cohesion* (because parts operate for the same communicative purpose), *sequential cohesion* (when the output from one segment is the input to another), *functional cohesion* (when parts contribute to a single well-defined purpose [10].

To do thematic analysis properly you need to be familiar with both the subject matter content of the text and with the semantics of at least basic lexical and grammatical relations at the level of textual segments. More commonly and very importantly, a thematic pattern may be repeated and varied at different levels of abstraction: not just chains of individual lexical items but chains of whole thematic formations can interact. Normally, the themes or main concerns, emerge through the details of the narration, images and symbols, the narrative tone and stance; words, phrases, sentences are tools that bring home to the reader the potential range of possible interpretable topics. The matter of concern is what issues are being addressed in the text and what ideas form the focus of the author's interest.

The key topical points must be included into the analysis that will enable the reader to check that they are relevant and represent a logical natural progression while maintaining overall thematic balance. In order to comprehend the theme, it is required to examine closely what the author is implying, i. e. the meaning beyond the action. When looking at thematic structure, you might look for conflicts, ambiguities, uncertainties, tensions, key relationships, as these give clear guides to the direction of meanings in the text. What is more, transmission of information can be subtle: authors use a variety of methods to convey the meaning of their works. The purpose is to bring to light this meaning and the paths taken to create it.

In the end, text is fully understood and appreciated to the extent that the nature and interrelations of its parts are perceived, and that understanding will take the form of insight into the theme of the work in question.

Reading strategies: 1) Scan the text for particular bits of information with no necessity to read every word; sweep your eyes across the page slowly and smoothly, working your way down the extract from the top left, picking up information as you go. 2) Skim the text for the general impression or idea of the information, starting with the first couple of sentences and moving along until the last one; note that the first sentence is usually the topical one. 3) Remember, the introduction (first paragraph) contains the main idea or topic of the entire passage; it states the writer's opinion. 4) Read the conclusion (last paragraph) directly after looking at the introduction, as it often summarizes the main points of the passage. 5) Examine the layout of each paragraph before you read the passage. 6) Make sure that you understand the topic of each of the paragraphs in the passage by searching for topic sentences. 7) Search the passage for topic signpost keywords/phrases. 8) Choose the keyword/phrase from the question and locate it in the passage. 9) Look closely around keywords for further matching items to obtain the answer you require; if necessary read the preceding and succeeding sentences. 10) Learn to miss/omit irrelevant information in no relation to the theme of the text.

Study skills: 1) recognize topic sentences; 2) identify the main points and summarize them by skimming; 3) identify sequence of events in logical order; 4) locate and understand specific information; 5) make inferences as to the theme; 6) understand relations between the parts of a text through lexical/grammatical cohesion devices; 7) locate relevant details to the theme by scanning.

3. Making guesses about the author's tone and intention. Produced by socially situated writers, texts induce meanings, which come about through the complex interaction between the author's intention and the reader's ability to decode it. In most cases, users of language bring with them different dispositions toward language; it follows that the text you read is written from a particular point of view, which shapes or influences possible responses. Sometimes the narrator's opinion will be made clear in a direct address to the reader with an objective and omniscient voice; sometimes it will emerge through the tone of the narrative, its attitude to the given subject (tone can be viewed as an expression of attitude). In any case, the key items in the making of tone are the following: who it is who tells the story, from what perspective, with what sense of distance or closeness, with what possibilities of knowledge, and with what interest.

Writers purposefully use tone to express the message or the point of the excerpt. It suffices to look at the sentence structure (syntax) and word choice (diction) in order to figure out whether the passage is neutral (objective, explanatory, detached) or opinionated and emotional (subjective). If the text is clearly subjective, it is possible to decide if the author is positive (approving, sympathetic) about the subject matter or negative (disapproving) about it. The author's tone tends to be biased in many ways; it suggests his predisposition to influence the reader through emotional appeal and\or slanted presentation material. Bias may also be revealed through highly emotional statements, name-calling, stereotyping or over generalization, faulty assumption based on weak or inaccurate information, and contradiction.

The arrangement of the textual segments in the written text is determined by the author's intention seen as a specific junction of the writer's psychological, linguistic and stylistic potentials, based on a direct rendering or veiled address to the reader. This

kind of address is a synthesized product of the author's attitude to the described events and immediate inclusion of the reader into the presented situation exerting most effective emotional influence on the reader's logical and sensuous potentials.

Reading strategies: 1) Look at the title (headings and subheadings) and make sure that you see the purpose of the text. 2) Make guesses to work out intention of the writer. 3) Locate particular factual information. 4) Locate opinionated information. 5) Focus on the words that express the author's idea explicitly or implicitly. 6) Decide whether the information contained is biased or unbiased. 7) Find proper clues in the first and last paragraphs to support your guesses about the author's intention. 8) Remember that it is important to figure out the author's tone so as to understand subtleties of meaning. 9) Keep in mind the writer may not mean you take all the words literally, but may be using the figuratively.

Study skills: 1) identify explicit conclusions; 2) trace the development of argument for the issue presented; 3) recognize the attitudes, opinions and emotions of the writer; 4) understand structural and lexical appropriacy in terms of genre and register; 5) identify biased language.

4. Deducing meaning. Cohesive content organization enables textual segments to be packaged in ways which make them effective, given their purpose in the context. Connection of that kind is based on some semantic or associative relationship: an idea can furthermore support another idea by providing an explanation, evidence or arguments why this consistency should be true. It is supported by a certain organizational pattern*,* which refers to the way the writer develops his material (details, facts, ideas, examples) in order to convey a message, and is therefore clearly tied to both main idea and purpose. There are three main areas: *Patterns that List* (such as simple listing, order of importance, chronological order, sequence\process, spatial\place order, summary); *Patterns that Explain* (such as example\illustration, clarification, definition, description); *Patterns that Analyze* (such as cause\effect, comparison\contrast, division\classification).

It is commonly claimed that texts derive their meanings not only from those contained in discourse, but also from the meanings of genre or register, conventionalized social occasions, from which texts arise. Evidently, different types of register condition the meaningful side of text from the perspective of context, and it is the selection of meanings that constitutes the variety to which a text belongs. There are many messages communicated through the text and what we see on the surface is really only the tip of the iceberg. Grounded on this, the division of the text presupposes the presence of some textual segments built as combination of a number of semantically connected sentences disclosing one of the sides of the argument, presenting it from a single angle. In other words, the conception which equals the idea is divided into some kernel arguments structurally equal to textual segments. A certain sum of them, around one and the same argument proved from different angles, form their cohesive correlation to serve the purpose of disclosing the common idea of narration, i. e. the conception which permits one to speak of the solidity of the text. The structural divisibility of the idea is decomposed into its constituents each of which functions as a specific centre drawing up some complete segment of the text. Regarding this, three items must be taken into account: *consider* what is said, particularly subtleties of the imagery and the ideas expressed; *assess* how it is said, considering how the word choice, the ordering of ideas, sentence structure contribute to the meaning of the passage; *explain* what it means, tying your analysis of the passage back to the significance of the text as a whole [11].

Such orientation appears to be really helpful in showing how the resources of the text are used to create its meaningfulness. The revelation of the ideas embedded in the text is basically dependent on the issues behind them, the perspective of which affects how the world of the narration is seen and how the reader responds to it. Obviously, he is intended to recognize the problems posed (solved or unsolved); from him, certain qualities of response, taste, experience, value are called forth so that to do 'problem solving activities', aimed at adequate understanding of structure of values, world-view, ideological assumptions. Any kind of writing tends to use cultural codes and the structuring devices of narrative with a high degree of intentionality in order to offer a complex understanding of the raised problems. All in all, the acute reader will be aware of the distances and similarities between the world of the fiction and the world he inhabits; and will be aware of the significances of the selections and exclusions of the narrative in representing human experience.

Reading strategies: 1) Skim the text for the general idea of the information starting with the first couple of sentences moving ahead until the last sentence. 2) Skim the text to locate pieces of information relevant to the topic and main idea; then read carefully to find supporting details. 3) Learn to miss/omit irrelevant information, items that will not have a significant effect on the meaning of the text. 4) Search the passage for clues, keywords/phrases, contributing to understanding the gist. 5) Look closely around keywords for further matching items to obtain issues around the main idea. 6) Connect the introduction, which contains the main idea of the entire passage, directly with the conclusion, which typically summarizes the main points of the passage. 7) Work out ideas and raised around problems of each paragraph. 8) Look for clues to decide which of the statements most accurately brings out the main idea. 9) Summarize seeking the area of the beginning and ending in order to place information within these two locations. 10) Summarize the main points of the passage based on the ability to distinguish between main ideas and supporting ideas. 11) Understand whether to take some statements literally or when to read in between lines in order to get the real meaning of the text. 12) Pay attention to figurative language making implicit ideas most vivid.

Study skills: 1) extract main ideas; 2) distinguish the main idea from supporting details; 3) understand overall gist; 4) understand indirectly stated ideas and information through inference; 5) identify the content due to relevance of key words; 6) infer meanings and read 'between lines'; 7) recognize salient features of the text; 8) locate particular information including opinion or attitudes; 9) distinguish between viewpoints, outcomes, reasons.

5. Making cross-cultural comparison. Language is always used as part of a complex cultural activity based on a framework of references (ideas, beliefs and values) and textual information, therefore, is situated historically, socially, intellectually, with particular intents as well as social, gender, class, ethnic, racial perspectives. Hence, to study texts entails looking into the social context within which texts are embedded. Such a study provides of ongoing processes, such as the relationship between social change and communicative or linguistic change, the construction of social identities, or the (re)construction of knowledge and ideology.

Comprehension in this direction is aimed at raising the reader's awareness of socio-cultural factors encouraged by critical thinking. Whatever the text, the content is expected to increase one's awareness of the culturally-induced values of English-speaking nations and awareness of one's own priorities to make sure certain cultural standpoints can be explained. Readers are motivated to develop the ability to evaluate and refine generalizations about the source culture in terms of supporting evidence deduced from the text. In this way we automatically become exposed to the range of socio-cultural items such as: images and symbols; pictures and realia; conventions and behaviour; customs and traditions; stereotypes and expectations; values, beliefs and attitudes.

In most interactions, user of language appears to bring with him different dispositions related to socio-cultural conditions. Eventually, he is enhanced to make culturally induced connections which are likely to prompt effective comprehension choices. Specifically, the focus on the textual structures derives its framework from the cognitive, social historical, cultural and political contexts. Through close reading and reflection, we understand the way ideas and feelings are talked about in different cultures – to have a sense both of communities and different kinds of understanding there can be about matters of importance in human life.

The major goal of that kind of orientation is to increase the reader's consciousness of cultural similarities and differences and enhance understanding of the diversity of ideas and practices found across cultures in general

Reading strategies. 1) Consider the way the writer develops ideas throughout the cultural context of the text. 2) Seek proper clues to make out cultural symbols, stereotypes, images, beliefs, conventions, patterns of behaviour. 3) Develop awareness of socio-cultural information about another culture. 4) Reveal socio-cultural content of the disclosed topic. 5) Make cross-cultural comparison regarding cultural differences in views and attitudes to the issues put forward by the author. 6) Use acquired socio-cultural knowledge communicating the content of the passage. 7) Bring the ideas and theme of the text into relation with one's own culture.

Study skills: 1) come to terms with new experience in another culture, overcoming stereotypes and prejudices; 2) develop positive attitude and a capacity for understanding and accepting the unfamiliar; 3) extend socio-cultural awareness explaining differences between one's own and foreign cultures; 4) make use of the information in relation to cross-cultural differences; 5) learn to act as a mediator equipped with proper knowledge and manners in cross-cultural communication; 6) evaluate intercultural differences so as to develop one's own identity; 7) deal effectively with intercultural misunderstanding and conflict situations.

6. Vocabulary development. Before we go any further, it is important to distinguish type of language used in certain genre, socio-cultural conditions and style as individual peculiarity; a special role is played by the vocabulary in keeping particular register distinct with the purpose to convey ideas, give commentary, express critical opinion, etc.

Commonly, readers are supposed to record all the words and expressions they come across. However, extensive reading cannot be confined to these procedures, mainly on account of the fact that command of English is not often sufficient enough to mark off the proper lexicon. Otherwise stated, reading could be considered as carrier of information that should be observed and attended to with subsequent performance around major topical points: if the reader manages to comprehend the text, he begins to understand the proper choice of words, thus acquiring the ability to use the vocabulary effectively to the best advantage. As long as we master reading comprehensively, we enlarge and diversify its lexical background: one is bound to familiarize oneself with the variety of expression, and therefore one's own style improves subconsciously. Hence, elaboration of special techniques becomes a must and consists in separation of the text into ultimate meaningful arrangements enabling the reader to proceed step by step on the way to proper understanding. Clearly, the goal is not to offer a closed inventory of lexical items but to attract attention to existing association and interactive relationships between different specimens of English vocabulary. In this respect, it is possible to single out the following: 1) words of general language functioning, used both in everyday situations and professional settings as a means of spoken and written interaction; 2) words of general scientific vocabulary, not specialized enough to become terms but occurring in formal context and registers – constituting thematic word maps covering subject areas divided into Arts (education, history, linguistics, politics, psychology, sociology), Commerce (economics, industrial relations, management, marketing, public policy), Law (constitutional law, criminal law, family law, international law), Science (computer science, biology, geography, ecology); 3) lexical items like terms of standard use identified with the conceptual foundation of some industries, sciences, professional areas and functions; 4) systematic organization of the vocabulary with the focus on associative/paradigmatic relations realized as derivatives, synonymic/antonymic series, pairs of general vs particular, sets of related items around topical areas; – and syntagmatic relations reproduced in recurrent patterns of lexical-phraseological collocation and syntactic colligation; 5) words with changed meaning (narrowing\widening) and innovative coinages recently having entered the lexicon to name a new concept, trend, procedure or approach and represented in modern reference books, glossaries, dictionaries as well electronic media; mainly, these are words and expressions questionable from the point of view of the user, requiring comment and explanation, taking into account range of connotations, positive or negative, emotional or neutral; 6) expressive variation in functional use embedded in metaphors and idioms as part of stylistic interplay.

Reading strategies: 1) You may not understand every word in the passage, so guess the meaning from the context; if you have no idea – ask yourself if it contributes positive or negative meaning to the sentence. 2) If an unfamiliar word does not affect your understanding of the text, ignore it. 3) The more frequently unfamiliar words appear, the more important they are likely to be crucial for comprehension and you need to work out what it means from the general context of the text, words before or after the unknown word, phrases which expand or explain the meaning. 4) Make a note of keywords/phrases and associated vocabulary. 5) Note that the keywords may not be written exactly in the same way; the corresponding item may contain substituted words or those with a similar meaning. 6) Recognize cases of substitution with the help of paraphrases fitting into the content. 7) Recognize groups of words with the same pattern, a similar pattern, a less recognizable patter. 8) When considering a word or phrase, distinguish them according to their function as parts of

speech. 9) Remember about alternative ways of expressing the same meaning by synonyms, explanations or examples. 10) Focus on the words that link and relate ideas or emphasize the author's point.

Study skills: 1) guess unknown words and expressions from the context; 2) deduce the meaning of unfamiliar lexical items by using analogy; 3) recognize paraphrased meaning of common expressions; 4) make inferences related to the writer's choice of words; 5) distinguish between literal and figurative language; 6) deal with unfamiliar words in context.

Activate activities. As far as the learner of English is concerned, there is an essential side to his reading: he has to bother himself with an important question of acceptability of certain content in the view of a modern philologist. Thus readers are encountered with the problem of usability of a text as the model to be imitated, i. e. how to carry out their own performance activating covered content on critical thinking basis. It is essential that a reader is able to respond appropriately to the retrieved information rather than merely describe it but identify oneself with ideas by expressing opinions, giving reasons, speculating, hypothesizing, agreeing/disagreeing, justifying, and in the end assertively negotiating. To put it differently, responses need to go beyond pure description and contain a speculative problem-solving element.

So the reader is encouraged to think about implications of the information contained, providing his own point of view on the aspects of the topic discussed.

Reading strategies: 1) Develop debate based on different interpretations of a single text. 2) Learn how to elicit implications of the information contained. 3) Take up critical stance getting oneself to think. 4) Relate the reading to your personal values and attitudes. 5) Uncover the topic and main idea in the view of your opinion. 6) Produce response appropriately: work out arguments for/against, assertively state your point of view, agree/disagree, build up reasoning, criticize, suggest alternatives, summarize, generalize, contradict, exemplify, make comparisons. 7) Look beyond printed words and use intelligence to infer problems to talk about.

Study skills: 1) establish a set of problem-solving criteria; 2) draw conclusions based on evidence; 3) infer logical conclusions; 4) understand issues behind facts; 5) differentiate fact from opinion; 6) account for different views; 7) consider a variety of consequences; 8) critically evaluate all positions; 9) organize own ideas and communicate them effectively; 10) develop a positive, unbiased attitude.

In this way we have come up with the idea of academic reading defined as purposeful critical reading of a range of texts placed in certain subject areas, which requires careful synthesizing of sources with subsequent extensive and intensive reading for information retrieval. It is expected to be profound and comprehensive in terms of its content peculiarities based on interpreting critically explicit and implicit information inferred and deduced from the context in order to achieve a deeper understanding and a fuller appreciation of the retrieved information: you learn to see more, to uncover or create richer, denser, more interesting meanings.

Readers are given opportunity to read actual selections from a variety of publications putting forward global in nature issues. What is more, background knowledge of related topics embedded in texts is activated by the options following the reading passage, which are intended to bring about overall reading proficiency, inferring ability, using the vocabulary appropriately, as well as critical thinking. In the light of the given material it should be assumed that it is possible to build up common conceptually constructed frameworks and expectations, into which a reader fits the text by interpreting it. This provides the essential foundation of processing information so that a proficient reader can begin to achieve the highest goal of reading.

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