

АКТУАЛЬНІ ПРОБЛЕМИ ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ ОСВІТИ

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ENGLISH ACADEMIC READING: DEMANDS FOR PHILOLOGY STUDENTS KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Over the past decades there have been numerous studies on second language reading (M. Aliyeva, J. Bamford, E. Bernhardt, W. Grabe, F. Stoller, J. Hedgcock, D. Ferris, K. Koda, S. Krashen, K. Lems etc.). However, the methodology of teaching philology students English academic reading has not been worked out yet. To ground such a methodology it is necessary to specify skills and knowledge necessary for effective English academic reading.

The aim of the article is to substantiate and specify skills and knowledge necessary for fluent English academic reading.

The major objective of teaching reading is the formation of reading competence which can be defined as the ability to read authentic texts of different genres and types demonstrating different levels of understanding [3, p. 370] depending on the objectives of reading and the type of the text.

To work out the methodology of teaching philology students English academic reading it is necessary to analyse the components of reading competence among which scientists distinguish skills and knowledge [3, p. 370].

Skills are defined as: “an acquired ability to perform well” [8, p. 298]; “essential academic habits” [5, p. 296]; “an acquired ability that comprises interrelated yet separable (and arguably teachable) subskills” [6, p. 36]; an ability to solve communicative tasks in new situations [4, p. 96].

The last definition reflects the essence of the notion and regards skill as an acquired ability to solve communicative tasks in new communicative situations.

It is necessary to analyze reading skills and ground which ones are of utmost importance for effective academic reading. Grabe W. and Stoller F. L. think that reading skills “represent linguistic processing abilities that are relatively automatic in their use and their combinations (e.g., word recognition, syntactic processing)” [9, p. 15]. In our view, the definition doesn't demonstrate the peculiarities of the whole range of skills and focuses only on lexical, grammar skills etc.

Proctor R. W. and Dutta A. claim that reading skill is “goal directed,” “highly integrated and well organized,” “acquired through practice and training,” and gradually automatized [17, p. 18]. In general we agree with the view, though it may seem doubtful that all reading skills can be fully automatized. As B. C. Mikulecky [14] we think that proficient readers demonstrate unconscious and automatic usage of most of the skills, but not all

as, for example, critical thinking skills which are necessary for academic texts comprehension or in case of dealing with a challenging text when readers employ skills consciously and strategically.

Mikulecky B. C. describes reading skills as “cognitive processes” which readers use to understand a text [14].

To specify skills future philologists should possess to read academic texts efficiently, it is necessary to analyze the reading process.

The basic requirement for fluent reading comprehension is *automatic word recognition*. For example, first language readers can recognise: 98–100 per cent of all words in a text (at least at some basic meaning level), four or five words per second spending about 230 milliseconds per word [16]. Supporting W. Grabe and F. L. Stoller’s view on similar first and second language reading abilities at advanced levels [9, p. 4] we think that the given data are of equal importance for fluent second language readers. For such readers word recognition is very fast and automatic (when an eye sees a word, the reader accesses its meaning immediately) which requires a lot of practice in reading. It also proves the necessity of expanding student vocabulary and forming strong lexical skills. The last statement is argued by the data that to understand a text properly a reader should recognise at least 95 per cent of the words, recognition of 98–99 per cent of the words in a text lead to even a greater comprehension [13; 15]. It has been calculated that 95 per cent coverage of most texts requires a recognition vocabulary between 10,000 and 15,000 words; 98–99 per cent coverage – about 36,000–40,000 words [19; 21]. According to W. Grabe and F. L. Stoller a realistic recognition vocabulary for more advanced second language readers is above 10,000 words [9, p. 137] which seems quite reasonable and accessible. So besides mastering the vocabulary students should be taught to incorporate different strategies, encouraged to improve background knowledge to compensate for lack of vocabulary to fully comprehend challenging academic texts.

A fluent reader extracts grammatical information from words taken together (e.g., word order information, subordinate relations between clauses), define the meanings of words that have multiple meanings out of context [9, p. 16]. However, *rapid and automatic syntactic processing* is less obvious for second language readers in comparison with word recognition. W. Grabe and F. L. Stoller define two main reasons for it: 1) most students master second language grammatical structures before they become fluent readers; 2) to develop automaticity in using information from grammatical structures second language students need, first of all, countless hours of practice [9, p. 18].

As for the fourth year students who have already mastered or at least are supposed to have mastered all grammar structures, teaching academic reading should be focused most on lexical skills development and intensive practice through extensive and intensive reading. However, it does not mean neglecting grammatical structures. It seems reasonable to analyze grammatical characteristics of academic texts to define most difficult structures typically

used in academic discourse with further focus on them to promote automatic syntactic processing.

There is one more automatic reading process – *combining word and structural meanings into units*. The recognised words, that are kept active for a couple of seconds, along with grammatical information and background knowledge or what has been read before help a reader to make sense. Connecting such meaning units, students understand central ideas if they are repeated several times [9, p. 18].

The three above-mentioned processes should function relatively automatically for the fluent reader, otherwise the reading comprehension process slows down and the reader may misunderstand the text or it becomes very difficult for the reader to maintain comprehension [9, p. 19]. We can make the conclusion that on this level reading skills can be automatic.

There are also higher-level processes (in contrast to the previous ones which are considered lower-level ones) that refer to what we usually think of as reading comprehension. The most “fundamental” of them is the *coordination of main and supporting ideas of the text* to build the text model of comprehension. As new meaning units are added, the ideas that are used repeatedly and are logically connected to other information are considered to be the main ideas of the text. Under the influence of background knowledge, goals, motivation, task, text peculiarities, reader attitudes toward the text, feelings, expectations etc. the reader starts to *interpret the information from the text*, design a possible direction of the reading [9, p. 20–22].

Not all of the described processes are always of equal importance. The purpose of reading defines which reading process will be greater emphasized. For example, reading for general comprehension entails coordination of main and supporting ideas as well as text interpretation; finding specific information focuses on word recognition and background knowledge anticipation of what to look for; reading to learn presupposes creating “an accurate text model of comprehension”, and then logical interpretation which integrates new knowledge with existing one [9, p. 23].

Four conclusions become clear in terms of the information presented:

1. Skills which are typical of lower-level processes can be relatively automatic.

2. Skills of upper-level processes are not automatic.

3. Reading comprehension processes of fluent readers work simultaneously.

4. The purpose defines reading processes emphasized.

5. Difficulties may arise when readers do not possess the necessary linguistic resources (which means, first of all, the necessity of expanding student vocabulary on the topic), do not have sufficient background knowledge (presupposes some preparatory activities before reading academic texts) or do not have enough reading practice. Such difficulties will surely occur at the beginning so a slow translation of at least the most difficult points should be utilized.

Analysing identified by T. Hudson [11] four reading skill categories (decoding skills; fluency skills; comprehension skills; critical reading skills), we have come to the conclusion that the first two are typical of the lower-level processes while the other two – of the upper-level ones. We also fully agree with Bernhardt E. B. that the skills can be described separately, but functionally they are interrelated and interdependent [6, p. 36].

B. V. Rosenshine [18, p. 80] made a conclusion about seven subskill areas which are included into the above-mentioned four categories: information sequence recognition, recognition of words in context, identification of main ideas, decoding of details, inferencing, cause and effect recognition, comparing and contrasting.

The seven subskill areas have been subdivided by many scientists into detailed lists to help teachers set goals for foreign language learning. Table 1 demonstrates a generalized view of Hedgcock J. S. and Ferris D. R. [10, p. 39] on the components of reading competence and their development.

Table 1

Three sets of reading competence (by Hedgcock J. S. Ferris D. R. [10])

Reading Skills Development		
Name letters	Recognize contractions	Use a dictionary pronunciation key
Identify consonants and vowels	Divide words	Define high-frequency words
Read words on sight	Recognize synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms	Decode compound words
Recognize “silent” letters	Draw on and develop a rich working vocabulary	Use context clues to understand meaning
Recognize rhyming words	Understand polysemy (multiple meanings)	Recognize multiple phoneme–grapheme correspondences (“hard” and “soft” <i>c</i>)
Identify word roots and affixes (prefixes and suffixes, plural markers)	Recognize blends and consonant and vowel digraphs	
Reading Comprehension Development		
Categorize words and information	Modify incorrect predictions	Understand and use figurative language
Sequence words and information	Recognize and repair miscomprehension	Understand literary and academic forms
Follow directions	Integrate text information with existing schematic knowledge	Evaluate characters, narrators, authors
Read for information at a rapid speed	Identify tone or emotion in a text	Evaluate narrative settings
Retell a story	Generate inferences	Draw factual conclusions
Identify key words	Judge reliability of source	Distinguish fact from fiction and opinion
Identify main ideas	Compare and contrast	Recognize purposes for reading
Summarize	Judge propositional content	Shift purposes for reading as needed

Predict outcomes	Deploy strategies to monitor comprehension	Read critically
Reading Research and Study Skills		
Alphabetize	Use tables of contents, indexes, and glossaries efficiently	Use text-based, visual, and interactive electronic resources to collect and compile information; apply QUEST model (Question, Understand resources, Evaluate, Synthesize, Transform)
Cross-reference	Understand and synthesize information from various sources	
Use dictionary efficiently	Classify books and online sources by genre category	
Use encyclopedia efficiently	Use atlases, maps, graphs effectively	

Judging from the table, the development of reading competence presupposes the development of reading skills (lexical, phonological and grammar), reading comprehension as well as reading research and study skills. In our opinion, the table does not provide the sufficient list of skills especially for academic reading which demands high-level skills.

According to the table, Hedgcock J. S. and Ferris D. R. clearly distinguish reading skills and reading comprehension. The latter is, in our opinion, a broader category as it requires usage of interrelated skills such as fluency, efficiency, speed etc. and coordination of many processes during limited time [10, p. 37]. So we will consider reading skills and reading comprehension skills regarding the first ones as those referring to the lower-level processes and the latter ones – to the higher-level processes.

The table lacks clarity as, for example, some components from reading comprehension development can be regarded as study skills (e.g., *Deploy strategies to monitor comprehension, Judge reliability of source etc.*); some aspects are too general and need further explanation (e.g., *Read critically*), others do not have any reference to reading comprehension and can be viewed as a task to check comprehension (e.g., *Retell the story*).

Academic reading incorporates much research. Thus, research and study skills necessary for efficient academic text reading will also be grounded in our investigation.

As it has already been mentioned, we support the view [11; 12] that skills have a hierarchical character. Table 2 presents a three-level model of reading skills hierarchies [10, p. 40].

Table 2

A three-level model of reading skills (by Hedgcock J. S. Ferris D. R. [10])

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Decode print	Identify graphemes, syllables, words, word boundaries, phrases	Scan, fixate, anticipate, classify, test, match, verify hypotheses
Make sense of print	Assign meaning to words, phrases and sentences	Anticipate grammatical and semantic categories, match and verify hypotheses

Question messages	print-based	Identify discrepancies among divergent messages and between text content and what is known	Retrieve information from long-term memory, compare, make inferences
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The table demonstrates skills as those ranging from lower-level (e.g., making sense of print) to higher-level (e.g. anticipating, matching etc.) operations. We consider such an approach to be a useful one for understanding the process of reading and its teaching as well as for “developing curricular and constructing syllabi” [10, p. 40]. At the same time the following aspects should be taken into consideration:

1. The table does not contain the full range of reading skills and can be regarded as a schematic summary of reading skills hierarchy. As for academic reading, which demands a corresponding level of reading proficiency, students should deploy more skills.

2. Reading skills may “overlap within and across categories, frequently functioning interdependently” [10, p. 38] so reading skills can not be seen only in the strict hierarchical order.

The reading skills employed depend on why and how students read. According to W. Grabe and F. Stoller texts are read with the following purposes: to search for information, learn from texts, integrate information, write, search for information needed for writing, analyse and critique texts, for general comprehension. All these purposes are typical of academic and professional contexts. For example, students usually have to learn a considerable amount of information from a text which they have to read at a rather slow speed to comprehend it well (due to rereading and reflection which helps to build “rhetorical frames that organize the information in the text”), remember main ideas and important details, connect them to students’ background knowledge. Reading to integrate information requires critical evaluation of the information from the text and taking decision about its importance and how to integrate and compose the information from different texts and with what students already know [9, p. 6–7].

There are different types of reading. When a text is read just for specific information, it is called *scanning* which presupposes hurrying over most of the text until the necessary information is found. Students read with the speed of 400-500 (and up to 600 words per minute [10, p. 38]) and understand 40-50 % of information. Reading for gist or *skimming* is reading quickly through the text to get its general idea (for example, when it is necessary to decide whether to read an article or not) with the speed of 180-190 words per minute and understanding 70-75 % of the text. *Reading for a detail* students try to get the meaning out of every word and fully understand the text. The speed of reading is 50-60 words per minute [3, p. 377; 20, p. 22].

No matter how fast students may read depending on their purpose, when they are asked to memorise the material, their speed decreases to 138 words per minute [10, p. 37].

Table 3 presents the correspondence between the purpose and types of reading.

Table 3

Correspondence between the purpose and types of reading

Purpose of reading	Dominant type of reading
To search for information	Scanning
To learn from texts	Reading for a detail
To integrate information	Skimming, reading for a detail
To write	Skimming, reading for a detail
To search for information needed for writing	Scanning, skimming, reading for a detail
Analyse and critique texts	Reading for a detail
For general comprehension	Skimming

According to the table one type of reading rarely occurs in academic settings. Usually it is a combination of different types. For example, if students are reading with the aim of integrating some information they have to skim texts to understand their general ideas and decide whether they contain any useful information and are worth reading more thoroughly, to read for a detail with the aim of focusing on some difficult parts or analyzing them precisely.

As it has been mentioned, fluent reading requires a large vocabulary and a good command of grammar, So students should master the following **reading skills** [9, p. 130; 10] no matter which type of reading is employed: access the meanings of a large number of words automatically; assign meaning to words, phrases and sentences; infer meaning from phrase- and clause-level grammatical information; anticipate grammatical and semantic categories used.

On the basis of modern literature analysis [2, p. 503–506; 7; 9; 10, p. 39; 14] we have drawn up a list of **comprehension skills** for academic reading and classified them in accordance with the type of reading:

Scanning: identify the topic, contents and significance of academic texts (articles, theses, reports etc.) and decide whether the text is worth reading more in detail; find the necessary information in academic texts; select and understand evaluative judgements in academic texts; assess the importance of the information.

Skimming: understand the gist and main details of academic texts (articles, theses, reports etc.); define quickly the contents and expediency of a more detailed reading of academic texts; understand the gist and major details of long reviews, analytical and polemical articles which present different views; evaluate importance, novelty, certainty and persuasiveness of the information presented; understand the gist and major details of complicated academic texts which presuppose different treatment and be able to evaluate certainty and truthfulness of events and facts; infer the main idea using patterns and other clues; use context clues to understand meaning; classify ideas into major ones and details; anticipate the contents of the text on the basis of the title and key words; identify tone or emotion in a text; evaluate the accuracy of a text judging from what the reader already knows; integrate text

information with existing schematic knowledge; assess the relative importance of the information; recognize and repair miscomprehension.

Reading for a detail: understand argument in an academic text; follow the development of argument in academic texts; classify ideas into major ones and details; anticipate the contents of the text on the basis of the title and key words;

- distinguish facts, ideas and opinions in complicated academic texts expressed explicitly;

- distinguish author's opinion expressed implicitly and explicitly;
- differentiate information about real facts and assumptions;
- make conclusions about the author's choice of lexical items;
- make conclusions about the author's syntax;
- understand linking words;
- ask questions in an inner dialog with the author;
- categorize words and ideas into general and specific;
- identify the relationships between ideas;
- understand the structure of the text;
- be able to see connections between ideas;
- evaluate the accuracy of a text with respect to what the reader already

knows;

- recognize and repair miscomprehension;
- integrate text information with existing schematic knowledge;
- identify tone or emotion in a text.

Some skills are necessary for different types of reading (e.g., *evaluate the accuracy of a text with respect to what the reader already knows*) which proves the fact that the mentioned types are interconnected.

The next step is to define which research and study skills should future philologists master in order to comprehend challenging academic texts. Inspired by some investigations [2, p. 63–72; 10, p. 39] as well as classroom observation and taking into consideration the fact that students should be able to select texts for extensive reading, we have drawn a list of research and study skills:

- seek information from various sources;
- synthesize information from various sources;
- analyse information from various sources;
- select appropriate texts applying relative criteria;
- classify sources by genre category;
- analyze graphs, charts etc. effectively;
- use text-based, visual, and interactive electronic resources to collect and compile information;

- select effective reading and study strategies and techniques;
- analyze the conditions with the aim of selecting effective strategies and aids;

- analyze one's own learning style;
- reflect on the effectiveness of one's own reading process.

Another component of reading competence is knowledge which can be both explicit (knowledge of different facts) and implicit (knowledge how to perform some action) [1, p. 235].

On the basis of scientific literature analysis [2, p. 63–72; 10, p. 39] we have specified that to read academic texts efficiently students should know:

- types of reading;
- academic texts structure;
- academic style characteristics;
- linking words;
- genre characteristics;
- explicit and implicit meanings in the text;
- reading strategies;
- how to analyze the information critically;
- how to use strategies efficiently;
- general purposes;
- sources of information;
- peculiarities of one's own learning style;
- preferred strategies in accordance with one's own learning style.

To help students master new skills or improve existing ones it is effective to make them focus on one skill at a time and practice its application in different text with subsequent discussion of the process. In that case students eventually will be able to use the skill unconsciously as well as consciously and strategically while reading a challenging text [14].

All in all, we have analyzed the components of academic reading competence, specified reading, comprehension and study skills as well as knowledge necessary for effective academic text comprehension. The above-mentioned skills and knowledge cannot and should not be separated, but learned in support of each other.

Further research should focus on developing methodology of teaching philology students English academic reading.

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Аль-Гханімі К. Дж. Р. Читання академічних текстів англійською мовою: вимоги до рівня знань та вмінь майбутніх філологів

У статті проаналізовано компоненти компетентності майбутніх філологів в читанні академічних текстів англійською мовою (навички, мовленнєві та навчальні вміння, експліцитні та імпліцитні знання). З метою визначення знань, навичок та вмінь, необхідних для ефективного

читання академічних текстів, проаналізовано процес читання іноземною мовою. Обґрунтовано відповідність між цілями та видами читання і зроблено висновок, що читання академічного тексту передбачає залучення різних видів читання (ознайомлювального, вивчаючого, пошукового) залежно від цілей студентів та особливостей тексту. На основі вивчення сучасної наукової літератури обґрунтовано і конкретизовано знання, навички, а також мовленнєві та навчальні вміння, необхідні майбутнім філологам для ефективного читання академічних текстів. Мовленнєві вміння класифіковано відповідно до видів читання. Зроблено висновок про необхідність інтегрованого формування навичок та вмінь читання академічних текстів.

Ключові слова: читання академічних текстів, майбутні філологи, вміння читання, навчальні вміння, знання.

Аль-Гханіми К. Дж. Р. Чтение академических текстов на английском языке: требования к уровню знаний и умений будущих филологов

В статье проанализированы компоненты компетентности будущих филологов в чтении академических текстов на английском языке (навыки, речевые и учебные умения, эксплицитные и имплицитные знания). С целью определения знаний, навыков и умений, необходимых для эффективного чтения академических текстов, проанализирован процесс чтения на иностранном языке. Обосновано соответствие между целями и видами чтения и сделан вывод, что чтение академического текста предполагает использование разных видов чтения (ознакомительного, изучающего, поискового) в зависимости от целей студентов и особенностей текста. На основании изучения современной научной литературы обоснованы и конкретизированы навыки, речевые и учебные умения, а также знания, необходимые будущим филологам для эффективного чтения академических текстов. Речевые умения классифицированы в соответствии с видами чтения. Сделан вывод о необходимости интегрированного формирования навыков и умений чтения академических текстов.

Ключевые слова: чтение академических текстов, будущие филологи, умения чтения, учебные умения, знания.

Qabas Jameel R. Al-Ghanimi English Academic Reading: Demands for Philology Students Knowledge and Skills

The components of academic reading competence of philology students (reading, comprehension, study skills, explicit and implicit knowledge) have been analyzed in the article. With the aim of specifying skills future philologists should possess to read academic texts efficiently the reading process has been analyzed. It has been proved that proficient readers demonstrate unconscious and automatic usage of skills on the lower level of the reading process (automatic word recognition, rapid and automatic syntactic

processing, combining word and structural meanings into units). Skills of upper-level processes (coordination of main and supporting ideas of the text, interpretation of the information from the text) are not automatic and can be considered as comprehension skills. It has been concluded that reading comprehension processes of fluent readers work simultaneously and the purpose defines reading processes emphasized. Correspondence between the purpose and types of reading has been analyzed and it has been concluded that one type of reading rarely occurs in academic settings. It is suggested that for the fourth year students teaching academic reading should be focused most on lexical skills development and intensive practice through extensive and intensive reading. On the basis of scientific literature analysis reading, comprehension and study skills as well as explicit and implicit knowledge necessary for effective academic text reading have been characterized and specified in the article. Comprehension skills have been classified in accordance with the type of reading (scanning, skimming, reading for a detail). It has been proved that skills cannot and should not be separated, but learned in support of each other.

Key words: academic reading, future philology students, reading skills, comprehension skills, study skills.

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ДІЯЛЬНІСТЬ ОРГАНІЗАЦІЇ ОБ'ЄДНАНИХ НАЦІЙ З ПИТАНЬ ОСВІТИ, НАУКИ І КУЛЬТУРИ (ЮНЕСКО) З ПІДВИЩЕННЯ ЯКОСТІ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ

На сучасному етапі значно активізується діяльність міжнародних організацій у галузі освіти, яка направлена на розв'язання освітніх проблем, що є актуальними для багатьох країн світу. Безумовно, найбільш авторитетною міжнародною організацією, яку не без підстав називають центром міжнародної інтелектуальної співпраці, є Організація Об'єднаних Націй з питань освіти, науки і культури – ЮНЕСКО (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO). Її було засновано 16 листопада 1945 року, коли представники 37 країн, які зібралися в Лондоні, поставили свої підписи під Статутом ЮНЕСКО. Офіційно цей документ вступив у силу 4 листопада 1946 р. після ратифікації його 20 державами, а в грудні 1946 р. за рішенням Генеральної конференції ЮНЕСКО та Генеральної Асамблеї ООН