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READING PROFICIENCY AS PART OF PHILOLOGICAL COMPETENCE

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The article below deals with academic reading strategies aimed at developing the reader's ability to decode information embedded in the text. Special attention is paid to the way how adequate comprehension of the content is built up in the view of its genre and register conditioning, structural coherence, semantic cohesion as well as socio-cultural value. The main domains of the research cover methods of interpretation of the textual message communicated through the text as reflecting certain discursive and ideological system. Problems raised in the article appear to be really helpful so as to locate pieces of information, factual or opinionated, main or supportive, being relevant to a framework of inferences around socio-cultural code of the narration. Critical reading in this way increases the reader's awareness of cultural similarities and differences enabling to evaluate and refine generalizations about the source culture and its own.

Key words: philological competence, cross-cultural communication, comprehension, engagement, genre, register, coherence, cohesion, socio-cultural presuppositions, intention, theme structure, gist, issues.

INTRODUCTION

The function of language as a tool of cultural transmission makes the scope of philological studies widen due to access to existing literature through reading. Speculating on the aims of philology in "What is the English We Use?", Akhmanova O.S. claims that knowledge acquired in the course of reading develops using English professionally by a philologist in the proper sense [1, p.9]. According to her, "philology by definition implies reading extensively" [1, p.19]. In connection with this statement, philology is referred by Robinson R. to "the links between linguistics considered as a science and aesthetic and humanistic study of literature" [9, p.108]. So **the theoretical foundation** of the research presented lies in the assertion that being a philologist implies academic ability of literacy development through reading, distinguished by its relevance to interpreting some textual thing as created in the course of cross cultural communication and accomplished by the language itself as well as 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. In this respect, it makes it possible to give insights into a challenging area of coverage with a special emphasis on the assumption that the reader be seriously justified in its comprehension from the points of view of structure, semantics, socio-cultural value and register. Findings shaped in the article are **aimed** at revealing 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 his own literacy experiences.

In this respect, **the major task** is to describe reading as 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, intended to develop overall reading proficiency.

THE ARTICLE STRUCTURE

I. Forecasting reader's engagement and comprehension

The text arising in a specific social situation represents a highly combined, coherent and cohesive organization both on its structural and semantic planes. In this way, the reader is involved in a reconstruction of context through analysis of its content set up by certain variables. 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. An important point to be made here belongs to Vorodhbitova A. A., who calls the text as the form of work of art communication [5, p.239]. If to put it another way, the text communicates some message, which is expected to be decoded by a reader being a holder of his own value system. Thus, we are getting aware of necessity of monitoring cognition provided that the information presented were critically processed.

It makes evident the fact that 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:

- 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;
- 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.

The reader comes to know that different types of register condition the meaningful side of narration from the perspective of context, and it is the selection of meanings that constitutes the variety a text belongs to. Lastly, we must keep in mind that texts derive their meanings from those contained in discourse, and the meanings of genre or register as well as conventionalized social occasions, from which they arise.

2. Inferring thematic perspective

The system of themes, building up textual subject matter content, involves the reader's transitions in the meaningful development of the text. A thematic pattern may be repeated and varied at different levels of abstraction: not just chains of individual lexical items but chains of some thematic formations can interact. Commonly, the themes 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. It looks like presentation of states-of-affairs covering processes, activities, relationships, participants, attendant circumstances, ascribed attributes, conflicts, ambiguities, uncertainties, tensions. All in all, thematic patterns are meant to be properly organized through constituency structure, where a larger meaning unit is directly made up of smaller segments, and cohesive structure creating semantic continuity across segmental boundaries. According to Halliday M., cohesion occurs where texture of semantic relationships unite units scattered through the text [8, p.99]. This suggests the possibility of distinguishing the following:

- 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).

So we have to admit that the key topical points as providing textual coherence must be included into the analysis that will enable the reader to check if 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 given event. Obviously, transmission of topical 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. For reading, 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 text is fully understood and appreciated to the extent that the nature and interrelations of its parts are perceived.

3. Bringing out author's tone and intention

It is undeniable that texts produced by socially situated writers induce meanings, which come about through the complex interaction between the author's intention and the reader's ability to decode it, concisely like the process allegorically named by Lotman Y. M. "беседовать с книгой" [6]. By no means, being a generator of the message, the text requires an addressee so that its socio-communicative function could be performed. A particular point of view embedded in the narration shapes or influences possible reader's responses, whatever different dispositions might be. 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 intended implications of the writing, 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 like that: 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 main 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, approving, dismissive, encouraging, empathetic etc.). 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 of 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 fact of the matter is that arrangement of 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 product of the author's attitude to the described events and immediate inclusion of the reader into the presented situation, exerting effective influence on the reader's mind.

4. Getting to grips with gist and ideas

Cohesive content organization enables textual segments to be properly arranged in the view of their purpose given 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. In order to convey a message, certain organizational patterns are used by the writer in developing his material, factual or opinionated: listing (such as simple listing, order of importance, chronological order, sequence/process, spatial/place order, summary); explaining (such as example/illustration, clarification, definition, description); analyzing (such as cause/effect, comparison/contrast, division/classification).

There are many messages communicated through the text, and what we see on the surface is really only the tip of the iceberg, in terms of Dijk Teun van [4]. Grounded on the cohesive correlation, 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 common idea of the narration. 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: what is said, particularly subtleties of the imagery or informative perspective and the ideas expressed; 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 analysis of the passage back to the significance of the text as a whole. Such orientation appears to be really helpful in showing how far the resources of the text are used to create its meaningfulness.

What is more, revelation of the ideas presented in the narration is basically dependent on the perspective created by its ideological stance and issues raised around. It should be noted here that meanings, finding their expression in text, are commonly negotiated about in concrete situations of social exchange. Consequently, texts are regarded to be organized syntactic forms whose content-structure reflects the ideological organization of a particular area of social life. Following "A Common European Framework of Reference", it is assumed that language can never appear by itself – it always appears as the representative of a system of linguistic terms, which themselves realize discursive and ideological systems. Ideologies are viewed as interpretation frameworks, which organize sets of attitudes about other elements of modern society [3, p.25].

In the end, both the gist of the information and its comprehension conform to the reader's identity, cultural expectations, social position, values and resources. According to

this, he is intended to recognize the problems posed (solved or unsolved); from him, certain qualities are called forth to encourage 'problem solving activities', aimed at bringing out world-view or ideological assumptions. All in all, any kind of writing tends to use cultural codes and the structuring devices of narrative with a high degree of intentionality in order to provide the acute reader with a complex understanding of the raised problems.

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) that will accompany the subsequent interpretation of the text. Textual information is shaped historically, socially, intellectually, based on particular intents and perspectives: social, gender, class, ethnic, racial. Hence, reading entails (re) construction of knowledge and ideology looking into the cognitive, social historical, cultural and political contexts, within which texts are created. Comprehension in this direction leads to raising the reader's awareness of socio-cultural factors, namely: culturally-induced values of English-speaking people and original native priorities, dispositions, cultural standpoints [14, p.5-6]. Readers are motivated to develop ability to evaluate and refine generalizations about the source culture with the help of supporting evidence deduced from the narration. Subsequently, ideas and theme of the text are brought into relation with one's own culture.

Through close reading and reflection, it becomes possible to make judgments about the way ideas and feelings are appraised in different cultures, having access to 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. Eventually, the reader is encouraged to make culturally induced connections, which are likely to prompt effective comprehension choices. The major goal of that kind of orientation is to increase the reader's consciousness of cultural similarities and differences in views and attitudes to the issues put forward by the author, and enhance to use acquired socio-cultural knowledge communicating the textual content.

6. Developing vocabulary

Generally speaking, text is constructed by language used in certain genre, socio-cultural conditions and shaped in 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 only 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 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. As a result, elaboration of special techniques becomes a must, which consists in separation of the text into ultimate meaningful arrangements (lexical units) enabling the reader to proceed step by step on the way to proper un-

derstanding. 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:

- words of general language functioning, used both in every day situations and professional settings as a means of spoken and written interaction;
- 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);
- lexical items like terms of standard use identified with the conceptual foundation of some industries, sciences, professional areas and functions;
- 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;
- 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;
- expressive variation in functional use represented in metaphors and idioms as part of stylistic interplay.

CONCLUSION

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.

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Князева Н. А. Академическое чтение как часть филологической компетенции / Н. А. Князева // Ученые записки Крымского федерального университета имени В. И. Вернадского. Иностранная филология.

Межкультурная парадигма современного гуманитарного образования определяет актуальность исследования специфики филологической компетенции, где особую роль играют полученные через чтение знания, отражающие иную национальную языковую картину мира. В данной статье представлен систематизированный теоретический материал, отражающий современный подход к чтению, основанному на интерпретации текста с точки зрения его информативной интеграции, структурно-семантической когерентности, социо-культурной значимости и языкового регистра. Разработанная автором модель экстенсивного критического чтения ориентирована на развитие дискурсивно-логического понимания англоязычных публицистических текстов (уровень C1, C2) и интерактивную вовлеченность читателя в толкование текстового содержания.

Ключевые слова: филологическая компетенция, межкультурная коммуникация, социо-культурные presuppositions, жанр, регистр, когерентность, когезивность, интенция, импликация, идейная проблематика, тематическая организация.