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EFFECTIVE READING – A LEADING FEATURE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

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***Abstract.** The article deals with modern approach to the important aspect of language learning such as reading skills and its connection to the text processing and efficiency of reading.*

***Key Words:** reading, metacognition, text, text processing.*

ЕФЕКТИВНЕ ЧИТАННЯ – ВАЖЛИВИЙ АСПЕКТ У ВИВЧЕННІ ІНОЗЕМНИХ МОВ

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***Анотація.** У статті розглядаються сучасні підходи до важливих аспектів вивчення іноземної мови, таких як навички читання та їх взаємодія з обробкою тексту та ефективністю читання.*

***Ключові слова:** читання, метапізнання, текст, обробка тексту.*

ЭФФЕКТИВНОЕ ЧТЕНИЕ – ВАЖНЕЙШИЙ АСПЕКТ В ИЗУЧЕНИИ ИНОСТРАННЫХ ЯЗЫКОВ

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***Аннотация.** В статье рассмотрены современные методики изучения иностранных языков, таких как навыки чтения и их взаимодействие с обработкой текста и эффективностью чтения.*

***Ключевые слова:** чтение, метапознание, текст, обработка текста.*

Reading process is very important and complex, and it is obviously necessary in different areas of social life. And what is more important – it plays principal role in language learning. The reading process requires continuous practice, development, and refinement. What is known about “good” or effective readers? One of the first studies in this area was carried out by scientists Gibson and Levin [2]. It was rather extensive and covered adults reading in their native

language. The finding was rather significant and showed that good readers adjust to the materials at hand and try to fit their reading skills to the type of the text they are reading and also to their goals of reading. When discrepancies occur (e.g. between such things as text content and its title, between linguistic competence and the text or extratextual knowledge and the text) good readers always know what to do not to follow wrong strategies but to find new ones, how to bring into effective action old strategies, and how to combine best working strategies in the specific interpretation process when needed.

When a student is looking at the written text there are a lot of questions arising in front of him such as: if he should read this text, what should he expect it to tell him, what should he know about the writer of this text and what is this text aimed for? Of course the readers usually have good causes for reading this text. They may be academic and other specific professional purposes, curiosity, relevance to his concerns, pleasant time spending. The reason for reading the text is closely connected with the intensity of reading and as a consequence it affects the choice of reading strategy.

During the process of reading the following questions may appear: if the student understands the author's point, if this text is necessary to be read carefully, if all the key (important) words are understandable, if the argument is clear, if the text worth his efforts for reading, if the text can be read quicker and more efficiently. All these questions relate to top-down and bottom-up text processing, and they are connected to the choice and aims of a reader.

When the reading process is going on the reader is wandering along the decision-making continuum trying to find proper answers for the previously asked questions. In case of effective comprehensive process during reading the reader's expectations and real text fit closely. But sometimes in case of discrepancies the reader is stuck and text processing is slowing down. A good reader makes adjustments for the text all the time by using background knowledge for top-down processing and by altering strategies to fit bottom-up decoding of some text. To

understand the text the reader makes a combination of bottom-up and top-down strategies in the most efficient way.

Good readers are considered not only great strategy users but also effective decoders [1] who successfully use different exact bottom-up techniques automatically. They identify multiple phrases, words, sentences, expressions very well even without perfect knowledge of the context and consciously employ bottom-up strategies to compensate situations when top-down strategies show a mismatch.

Reading in a second language is often a serious problem for students. Some researchers showed that readers should process at least two hundred words per minute for effective reading. Thus there can be a conclusion made that a teacher must help the students to measure and increase their reading rate to make their comprehension better. The teacher should take into account some of the facts which reduce reading rate: limited perceptual span i.e., word-by-word reading; slow perceptual reaction time, i.e., slowness of recognition and response to the material; vocalization, including the need to vocalize in order to achieve comprehension; faulty eye movements, including inaccuracy in placement of the page, in return sweep, in rhythm and regularity of movement and many others.

The teacher should activate a desire to improve, willingness to try new techniques and motivation to practice in his students. The suggestions for increasing reading rate may be found anywhere. The interesting researches were made by Edward Fry who published plenty of books concerning reading skills improvement [4].

Efficient readers make good use of co-text. That is the information available in local sense. But the most important thing about good readers is their ability of constant readjustment. This means constant comparison of new and old information as well as experience at the local and global levels. This is the practice of good listeners which also have their distinctive features. Grabe showed in his research on reading that good readers “appear to make better use of text

organization. They write better recalls by recognizing and using the same organizational structure as the text studied” [3:381].

Good readers in the first language may get their so called skills by intuitive use of different processing techniques. The ESL/EFL reader should know these strategies in case of the problems arising during reading process which may be caused by lack of content or some linguistic deficiency. For a teacher it is important to encourage the students to develop metacognitive consciousness of the interpretation process and every student’s processing strategy.

Another study performed by Schoonen and other scientists showed that metacognitive knowledge is highly important for advanced readers in their first and second language. During this study it was found that weaker students with average skills have not acquired metacognitive knowledge and it is necessary to instruct them in a specific way, while the advanced students showed metacognitive knowledge. The significant conclusion in the area of foreign language teaching was made that strong metacognitive knowledge, reading aims, and text features cannot compensate for language specific knowledge in case when such knowledge lies under a certain threshold level. Thus it focuses on the necessity for a good reader to possess both language knowledge for bottom-up processing and main knowledge for top-down processing with metacognitive knowledge acting as a conciliator.

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