CHALLENGES FOR CHILDREN’S TEACHERS
IN THE CONTEXT OF TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGES

Ewa Zimny
MA, lecturer, Małopolska Uczelnia Państwowa w Oświęcimiu, Racibórz, Poland
e-mail: ewa-zimny@wp.pl

SUMMARY
Quality of education and upbringing has always been the subject of anxieties of parents, teachers, educators and policy-makers. In every age people were not fully satisfied with school structures, programs and teaching content and the effects of education. Education is understood as the process of promoting the development that should help children make progress, facilitate entry into adult life. Very large role in the development of a small child is a kindergarten teacher — high-class specialist who nurtures, educates and cares for comprehensive development. The attention to learning outcomes and inspire action for the quality of education and teaching is the main task of pedagogical supervision, written in the Law on the Education System. Inspiring, directing, coordinating and monitoring the activities of teachers who are working to improve educational outcomes — educational, the role of the director of the kindergarten.

Key words: quality, efficiency, teacher, director, professional advancement, child, kindergarten, competence, cooperation, development, effects, school system.

Стаття надійшла до редакції 01.11.2021

ENHANCING READING COMPREHENSION
COMPETENCE: MODELS, STRATEGIES,
TECHNIQUES, AND ACTIVITIES

Olena Vovk
Doctor of Linguistics, Professor, Professor of the Department of English Philology and Teaching English at Bohdan Khmelnytsky National University of Cherkasy, Cherkasy, Ukraine
e-mail: vavovk66@gmail.com
ORCID ID https://orcid.org/0000–0002–6574–1673

Ihor Dobrianskyi
Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor, Professor of the Department of Separate Structural Subdivision Flight Academy of the National Aviation University, Kropyvnytskyi, Ukraine
e-mail: kiusz@ukr.net
ORCID ID https://orcid.org/0000–0002–7703–532X

Olena Zymomrya
Candidate of Philology, Associate Professor at the Department of International Communications, State Institution “Uzhhorod National University”
Uzhhorod, Ukraine
e-mail: zimmok@ukr.net
ORCID ID https://orcid.org/0000–0001–7206–0190

SUMMARY
This study propounds a conceptual framework of advancing reading comprehension competence (RCC) among University students majoring in bilingual pedagogy. The study arises out of a need to introduce learners to reasonable approaches to acquiring reading skills and provide them with a relevant practical guidance. The proposed methodology is multifaceted, since it is aimed at solving multiple tasks: helping students adequately understand and interpret English and American literature, obtaining knowledge of other
The elaborated methodology of enhancing RCC is grounded on the underlying principles and model of the communicative and cognitive approach (O. Vovk). This approach is targeted at promoting students basic communication skills and cognitive faculties.

Key words: reading comprehension, reading comprehension competence, reading skills, reading comprehension models, strategies and techniques, reading activities.

Introduction. It is increasingly recognized that successful FL acquisition is impossible without developing one of the basic FL skills — RC, which is still at the core of many debated issues in the areas of bilingual education and FL pedagogy. This can be accounted for by continuous accumulating the data that prove the significance of RC not only for a communicative development of learners but also for their cognitive advancement. The evidence seems to be cogent that RC should be prioritized in the process of FL acquisition. Consequently, it will be plausible to premise that a considerable amount of research needs to be done in this domain, since the generating interest in the issue of RC still raises a sufficient number of controversies.

Purpose. This paper explores the general features of RCC — a key axis around which this study is formed. It also synthesizes the basic methods, strategies and techniques of RC, which may promote gradual development of this integrated skill. Furthermore, the article demonstrates the succession of acquiring RCC by students of bilingual pedagogy and provides a system of diversified communicative and cognitive activities, devised specifically for this purpose. Next, it exhibits the results of the pedagogical experiment aimed at validating the efficacy of the constructed methodology and proposes implications for further research in this field.

Theoretical background. A number of scholars address the issue of fostering reading competence and consider it from various angles. In particular, W. Grabe and G. Tompkins attempt to define the concept of ‘reading competence’; B. Honig highlights the role of RCC in foreign language (FL) acquisition; F. Davis generalizes essential skills for RC (decoding, fluency, vocabulary, sentence construction and cohesion, reasoning and background knowledge, working memory and attention); O. Vovk establishes the framework of enhancing RCC; M. Wolf identifies the strategies to improve RC (enlarging vocabulary, practicing critical text analysis, and deep reading); W. Gray singles out three levels of reading endeavor (reading the lines, reading between the lines, and reading beyond the lines); A. Palienko, O. Afanasyeva devise specific activities aimed at acquiring RCC.

Statement of the Problem. However, most of the proposed activities lack a cognitive component, which is essential in acquiring RCC. With that in view, this study proposes congruous assignments, which embrace a cognitive constituent. The system of activities is grounded on the principles and model of the communicative and cognitive approached elaborated by O. Vovk. The principles posit significance of stimulating students’ mental and speech performance, fostering their growth as linguistic personalities, extending their knowledge space and framing their worldview, boosting multiple intelligences and promoting the ability to conceptualize the input. The aforementioned principles can be efficaciously actualized within a University curriculum in a FL course, specifically, while learning reading skills, and respectively, acquiring RCC.

Methods. The efficacy of the proposed framework has been tested and validated in a pedagogical experiment adapted for the students majoring in bilingual pedagogy (they were split up into experimental and control groups). The experiment was meant to expose how the designed methodology can promote achieving the high level of RCC. In the course of preparation for the experiment, it was hypothesized that obtaining a sought-for level of RCC was possible on condition the process of teaching RC was built in accordance with the basic premises and model of the communicative and cognitive approach, and incorporated a system of appropriate activities specifically designed for this purpose. The results of the experimental training in RC revealed positive dynamics of advancing students’ RCC and displayed a considerable increase in reading skills of the students. In particular, the level of their RCC rose from 75 to 95 points. The increase in the qualitative index of acquired RCC in experimental groups amounted on average 20 points.

The experimental training demonstrated the efficiency of the constructed methodology. The results were obtained through numerous communica-
The comprehension of a text entails three levels of endeavor — reading lines, reading between lines, and reading beyond lines. Reading lines means improving mapping skills. However, these skills do not develop automatically as a by-product of language development. Current psycholinguistic theories hold that learning — be it of language or reading — is the process of detecting, abstracting, and internalizing structural regularities implicit in the input. Under this view, the input frequency and input experience are the key determinants of what is learned and how well it is learned [5, p. 113; 11, p. 161; 17, p. 531].

Reading between lines presupposes enhancing text-based inference skills. The construction of coherent text information requires the integration of successive text elements into a meaningful whole. When conceptual gaps occur while constructing text meaning, a missing link must be created through inference by activating prior knowledge. Inference skills are thus critical for text comprehension. Because inference refers to “information that is activated during reading yet not explicitly stated in the text” [18, p. 556], its generation necessitates both semantic and conceptual analyses to mentally bridge voids in explicitly stated text elements.

Reading beyond lines implies promoting knowledge incorporation. To gain a new insight from the text, reading must go beyond basic comprehension. According to B. Lonergan, insights is enhanced understanding, which occurs when the reader senses either a new relationship among conceptual elements within a knowledge base, or new conceptual relationships between multiple knowledge bases. For enhanced understanding to occur, therefore, assembled text information must be incorporated in the reader’s prior knowledge. This indicates that what one can learn from a particular text is largely determined by how s/he is knowledgeable on the topic, as well as how well a reader can incorporate the knowledge in the assembled text information [12, pp. 5–10; 16].

Furthermore, to improve students’ RC, teachers should introduce pertinent strategies. Comprehension strategies are conscious plans — sets of steps that good readers use to make sense of a text. Comprehension strategy instruction helps students become purposeful active readers who are in control of their own RC [6]. It is apposite to refer to such strategies of effective readers: activating, inferring, monitoring—clarifying, questioning, searching—selecting, summarizing, and visualizing—organizing. Cognitive strategies are mental processes used by skilled readers to extract
and construct meaning from a text and to create knowledge structures in the long-term memory. When these strategies are directly taught and modeled for struggling readers, their comprehension and retention improve [13; 9].

Also, there are effective strategies for RC, which have research-based evidence for conducing to the understanding of the lines and between the lines [6; 7):

1) monitoring comprehension (instruction can help students become better at monitoring their comprehension);

2) metacognition (good readers use metacognitive strategies to think about and have control over their reading. Before reading, they might clarify their purpose for reading and preview the text. During reading, they might monitor their understanding, adjusting their reading speed to fit the difficulty of the text and “fixing” any comprehension problems they have. After reading, they check their understanding of what they read.);

3) generating and answering questions (they give students a purpose for reading; focus their attention on what they are to learn; help students to think actively as they read; encourage readers to monitor their comprehension; help learners to review content and relate what they have learned to what they already know);

4) recognizing story structure (students learn to identify the categories of content (characters, setting, events, problem, resolution);

5) summarizing (it requires students to determine what is important in what they are reading and to put it into their own words. The instruction in summarizing helps students to: identify or generate main ideas; connect the main or central ideas; eliminate unnecessary information; remember what they read);

6) graphic and semantic organizers (they illustrate concepts and relationships between concepts in a text using maps, graphs, charts, frames, or clusters. Regardless of the label, graphic organizers can help readers focus on concepts and how they are related to other concepts. Graphic organizers can help to focus on text structure differences between fiction and nonfiction as they read; provide students with tools they can use to examine and show relationships in a text; aid readers to produce well-organized summaries of a text). Here are some examples of graphic organizers [6; 7; 8].

Venn-Diagrams: they are used to compare or contrast information from two sources [2, p. 331; 3, p.359] (Fig.1):

![Figure 1. Venn-diagrams](image)

Chain of Events: it is employed to order or sequence events within a text [2, p. 334; 3, p.355] (Fig. 2):

![Figure 2. Chain of events](image)

Mind Map: it is utilized for representing words, concepts, or items linked to and arranged around a central concept or subject using a non-linear graphical layout that allows the user to build an intuitive framework around a central concept [2, p. 332; 3, p.354] (Fig. 3):
Story Map: it is employed to chart the story structure. For example, defining characters, setting, events, problem, resolution in a fiction story; however in a nonfiction story, the main idea and details would be identified [2, p. 335; 3, p.356] (Fig. 4):

Figure 3. Mind map

Figure 4. Story map

Cause/Effect Model: it is used to illustrate the cause and effects narrated within a text [2, p. 332; 3, p.356] (Fig. 5):

Figure 5. Cause/effect model

Interaction Outline: it is effective for organizing events in terms of action and reaction. It is also used to show the nature of an interaction between persons or groups [2, p. 333; 3, p.357] (Fig. 6):

Figure 6. Interaction outline
Compare/Contrast Model: it is utilized to analyze two subjects by comparing them, contrasting them, or both [2, p. 334; 3, p.358] (Fig. 7):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute 1</th>
<th>Name 1</th>
<th>Name 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attribute 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attribute 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7. Compare/contrast model

Effective comprehension strategy instruction can be accomplished through cooperative learning, which involves students working together as partners or in small groups on clearly defined tasks. Students work together to understand texts, helping each other learn and apply comprehension strategies [6; 7]. Effectiveresearchersemploystrategies to understand what they read before, during, and after reading. Commonly, before reading, they [16]:

- use prior knowledge to think about the topic;
- make predictions about the probable meaning of the text;
- preview the text by skimming and scanning to get a sense of the overall meaning.

While reading, they:

- monitor understanding by questioning, thinking about, and reflecting on the ideas and information in the text.

After reading, they:

- reflect upon the ideas and information in the text;
- relate what they have read to their own experiences and knowledge;
- clarify their understanding of the text;
- extend their understanding in critical and creative ways.

It is deemed plausible to specify these strategies by the following activities [15; 16]:

Before Reading
Ask Questions
What can I ask myself before reading to help me understand this text?
1. Who is the author, or what interests does he or she represent?
2. What do I already know?
3. I wonder if...
4. What do I need to know?
5. What do I want to know more about?
6. What am I uncertain of?

While Reading
What can I ask myself as I read this text to help me understand?
1. Does this make sense?
2. How does this information relate to what I already know?
3. What does the writer say about...?
4. What does the writer mean by...?
5. What does this statement mean?
6. How controversial is this fact?
7. I still need answers to the question...

At a tricky part in the text, I...

- pause to think about...
- take a closer look at...
- break the text into "chunks"
- summarize as I read
- discuss what I have read.

How can I read between the lines?

- Based on what I have just read, I now realize...
- The evidence that supports my thinking is...
- I can now conclude...
- I think... because...

Visualize
To better understand while I was reading...

- I pictured what ... might look like...
- I created a mental image of...
- I used the images to help me...

I Make Connections with...

1. My experience.
2. Other books (texts).
3. The world.

How can I use what I already know to help me understand this text?
1. I already know about...
2. This text reminds me of...
3. This compares to...
4. This text is different from... because...
5. This section made me think about...

Think to Read
When I get to an unfamiliar word or section, I...
• look at photographs, diagrams, tables, or charts;
• reread for meaning;
• use context and clues for hints;
• skip and return;
• pause and ask questions.

Take Notes
To take good notes I...
• look for the main idea (s);
• use words I understand;
• limit the number of words — restate, delete, combine;
• organize with headings;
• use symbols, colours, and webs to organize;
• review, add, and revise.

After Reading
Ask Questions
1. What can I ask to help me understand this text?
2. What does the writer mean by...?
3. Why did/didn’t...?
4. What have I learned?
5. I wonder if...?

Find the Main Idea (s)
What is the most important thing I remember about this text?
1. The main message is...
2. The text was mainly about...

Think about the Text
How do I put all the pieces together?
1. The message of this text is...
2. The purpose of this text is...
3. These ideas relate to... because...
4. This text may be biased because...
5. This text doesn’t deal with...

To summarize, the comprehension of the text requires employing title strategies, which encompass a number of activities targeted at students’ being able to peruse the text and promote not only its literal understanding but also revealing its deep senses encoded in it — this will enhance subjects’ RC and make them proficient readers with a high level of RCC.

In order to develop RCC it is essential to devise a relevant system of activities with reference to the stages of reading, namely [3, p. 217]: 1) pre-reading stage; 2) a while-reading stage; 3) a post-reading stage. The pre-reading stage is believed to be an effective medium of establishing the content of the text, learning anticipation, which is the basis of understanding. The purpose of the pre-reading stage is to [3, p. 217]: create motivation for reading; introduce students into the content of the text and remove difficulties (lexical, grammatical, socio-cultural, semantic); develop an “understanding strategy”; predict or anticipate the content of what will follow to ensure understanding. Here are some instances of the assignments employed at this stage [2, p. 118; 3, p. 216]:
1. What do you know about the author of the story?
2. What does the title of the story suggest?
3. Does the title suggest what problems will be raised in the story?
4. What do you think will happen to the main character?
5. Do you suppose the end of the story will be happy or sad?

The aim of the reading stage is to create communicative settings that provide guided reading, search for necessary information, finding a solution to cognitive-communicative issues in the reading process, for example [2, p. 118; 3, p. 218], substage 1: first reading.
1. Skim the text and find out what the text is about.
2. What are the major problems raised in the story?
3. What does the author focus on?
4. Read through the first and the last passages and define what information can be found in between these passages?
5. Read through the last passage. What do you think the beginning of the text was?
   Substage 2: second reading.
   1. Read through the text carefully.
   2. Find the correct answers to the given questions.
   3. Highlight the problems the author focuses on in the text.

The post-reading stage is targeted at checking students’ RC, enhancing and improving their reading skills and the ability to use the acquired information orally and in writing. The experts propose three groups of assignments at this stage. The first group requires reproducing the text by keywords and phrases, compressing, reducing or condensing the text. Other assignments of this stage comprise dividing the text into meaningful chunks, making an outline to each section of the text, providing key phrases or sentences for each point in the outline, and more, for example [2, p. 129; 3, p. 219]:
   1. Copy out the key words that convey the main idea of it.
   2. Identify the key sentence in each passage.
   3. Formulate the thesis of the text.
   4. Make a sentence/question outline to the text.
   5. Supply the lexical material to cover each point of the outline.
   6. Divide the text into semantic parts and entitle each of them.

The second group of activities is aimed at developing reproductive and productive skills to reconstitute and interpret the content of the text within the scope of the raised problems: these skills imply reasoning, expressing opinions and judgments about these problems, evaluating the information in terms of its relevance to students, reporting on what students have learned from the text, what they were surprised at, etc. [2, p. 129; 3, p. 219; 4, p. 114; 1, p. 98], for instance:
   1. Comment on the following expressions from the text...
   2. Use the words and expressions from the box to describe ... Feel free to use any extra information to fulfill the task.
   3. What continuation of the story would you suggest?

The third group of assignments is aimed at developing and elaborating on productive skills that allow students to utilize the information from the text in situations that simulate communication (such as role-plays) and in situations of natural communication: learners speak upon the characters’ stances, discuss the issues the author is addressing in the story, write a review, suggest their own development of the events, etc. These engaging assignments are also designed to sharpen reading strategies with thought-provoking activities: graphic organizers, reading booklets, creative expression, mixed reviews, for example:
   1. Recite the story from the perspective of....
   2. Write a letter to your American friend about....
   3. Comment on the maxims you have come across in the text. Why did the author use them?
   4. Complete the following tasks:
      A. Formulate the thesis of the story.
      B. Brief the gist of the text.
      C. Construct a model/semantic net of the text.
      D. Summarize the main ideas of the story.
      E. Give your opinion as to the problems raised in the story.

It is relevant to point out that the post-reading stage can fall into several substages, for instance [2, p. 130; 3, p. 219]:
   Substage 1: first reading. At this substage, the issues raised before the skimming reading are discussed.
   Substage 2: second reading.
   1. Agree or disagree with the statements based on the text.
   2. Describe the positive and negative characters in the text.
   4. What information of the text is primary and what is secondary? Substantiate your answer.
   5. Whom would you recommend to read this text and why?
   6. Discuss the actions of the main characters. Express your attitude to their behaviors.

It should be emphasized that the proposed framework of advancing students’ RCC follows the model of the communicative and cognitive approach designed by O. Vovk [19; 20; 21; 22; 23]. This model has an intelligible and comprehensive structure. Each stage of the model aims at reaching definite goals (see fig. 8). Within the framework of the model, the processing of the input implies progressing through the following phases: perception of new information and its superficial understanding (reading lines), multifaceted processing of information, its mental representation and a deep understanding (reading between lines), and using the processed information in productive communication output (extending lines).
Conclusion and implications for further research. In conclusion, teacher-trainees of English should be introduced to reasonable approaches of teaching RC and provided with a relevant practical guidance, which can ensure successful RCC. That is why the procedure of developing RC and an appropriate system of assignments has been brought to the fore of this study. The basic models of reading (bottom-up, top-down, interactive) have been looked upon as appropriate tools of enhancing RCC, teaching RC, and acquiring reading skills.

The teacher’s primary aim in enhancing reading skills is to make the understanding of the text both automatic and simultaneous, which can be done at the recognition and selection levels when students perform various mental and speech operations in accordance with the given assignments. The comprehension entails three levels of endeavor — reading lines, reading betweenlines, and reading beyond lines.

The suggested template for introducing cognitive and comprehension strategies may increase the efficiency and confidence with which a learner approaches a reading assignment. Monitoring comprehension, metacognition, graphic and semantic organizers (Venn-diagram, chain of events, mind map, story map, cause/effect model, interaction outline, and compare/contrast model), answering questions, generating questions, recognizing story structure, and summarizing are effective strategies for text comprehension.

Researchers distinguish reading strategies in terms of stages (before reading, while reading and after reading: they have been specified and exemplified by relevant activities presented in the study. It has been demonstrated that learners’ RCC may be acquired through the stages of learning within the framework of the communicative and cognitive approach. Each of the stages is distinguished by definite discriminative features and goals. The suggested methodology promotes a spiral model of cognition since every final stage of learning may be regarded as an initial stage of a new curricular cycle.

The current study offers several insights into how an effective process of enhancing RCC of students majoring in bilingual pedagogy can be organized. Notwithstanding, it is far from being conclusive. It provides implications for further research of the issue under discussion with a more prominent focus on the cognitive dimension of the devised framework.
REFERENCES

Afanaseva O. S. Formuvannya lіteraturoznавчої компетентності майбутніх учителів зарубіжної літератури у процесі професійної підготовки: дис. ... канд. пед. наук. Черкаси, 2017. 362 с.


Adler C. R. Seven Strategies to Teach Students Text Comprehension. URL: https://www.readingrockets.org/article/seven-strategies-teach-students-text-comprehension


Reading Strategies. URL: http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/studentsuccess/ thinkliteracy/files/Reading.pdf


ФОРМУВАННЯ ЧИТАЛЬНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНЦІЇ: МОДЕЛІ, СТРАТЕГІЇ, ПРИЙОМИ І ЗАВДАННЯ

Олена Вовк
dоктор педагогічних наук, професор, професор кафедри англійської філології та методики навчання англійської мови Черкаського національного університету імені Богдана Хмельницького
Черкаси, Україна
e-mail: vavovk66@gmail.com
ORCID ID https://orcid.org/0000–0002–6574–1673

Ігор Добрянський
dоктор педагогічних наук, професор, професор кафедри Відокремленого структурного підрозділу Національного авіаційного університету «Кировоградська льотна академія Національного авіаційного університету»
Кропивницький, Україна
e-mail: kiusz@ukr.net
ORCID ID https://orcid.org/ ORCID 0000–0002–7703–532X

Олена Зимомря
cандидат філологічних наук, доцент кафедри міжнародних комунікацій ДВНЗ «Ужгородський національний університет»
Ужгород, Україна
e-mail: zimmok@ukr.net
ORCID ID https://orcid.org/0000–0001–7206–0190

АННОТАЦІЯ
У статті пропонується сучасна методика формування читальній компетенції студентів університету зі спеціальностю «Середня освіта». Написання статті зумовлено потребою ознайомити студентів з рациональними підходами до завдання читання та озброїти їх відповідними практичними рекомендаціями. Запропонована методика є багатогранною, оскільки вона спрямована на розвиток навичок читання, адекватного розуміння інтерпретації англійської та американської літератури, допомагає формувати у студентів навички читання і розуміння тексту, які необхідні для майбутньої діяльності.

Розглянуто методику формування читальній компетенції студентів університету в контексті навчання англійської мови. Методика основана на використанні різних стратегій і прийомів читання, а також на формуванні навичок розуміння інтерпретації тексту. На основі цих зазначених та інших принципів методика формування читальній компетенції та впроваджена в практику навчання студентів університету.

Ключові слова: читання, розуміння тексту, читальні компетенції, навички читання, методика формування читальних навичок, навчання в іншомовному середовищні.