

TEACHING READING SKILLS FOR 1ST YEAR STUDENTS

This article is devoted to the problems of developing reading skills (skimming, scanning, intensive reading) for the 1st year students in the framework of General English Course.

It is generally agreed that learning to read well is a difficult and time-consuming process. Developing reading skills amid others takes a particular place in the framework of General English Course programme for 1st year students of UKMA. This programme is mostly based on Communicative Language Teaching Theory. Improvement of students' communicative competence, therefore, is one of the main goals in language acquisition and language learning, which are the two ways of developing competence in a second language.

All textbooks in use are based on communicative method which stresses the efficiency of teaching English through English. This is why reading is such a powerful strategy.

Our students seem not to be used to reading much and in the way they are supposed to read. Gradually practicing reading skills such as prediction, skimming, scanning and intensive reading, we meet our objectives. Reading is an activity involving constant guesses that are later rejected or confirmed. This means that one does not read all the sentences in the same way, but one relies on the number of words — or 'cues' — to get an idea of what kind of sentence (i. e. example, an explanation) is likely to follow.

For training the students to make predictions and guesses when reading a text we give them only the beginning of the text and ask them to predict what is likely to come next. "The Luncheon" by W. Somerset Maugham (Mosaic I (reading skills)) is the example of this type of exercises. At the beginning of each passage

there are some questions which are aimed to predict the following events.

One of the most important factors that can help us in the process of reading is the desire we have to read about a given subject. The more we look forward to reading and anticipate in our minds what the text could hold in store for us, the easier it will be to grasp the main point of the passage before reading it, we ask the students questions to make them aware of what they know, what they don't know, what they wish to learn about the topic. So, for example, in pre-reading task to the text "In search of Good English Food" (New Headway English Course) we ask the students whether they know any typical meals from the follow countries: France, India, China, Italy, etc; and what they think influences a country's food. Then we suggest them some quotations about English food and ask about students' opinion about English food.

Predicting and anticipating exercises prepare students for skimming, i. e. reading through a text quickly without looking at the details to get a general idea of it's content: the gist.

One way of skimming through a text is to look at the beginning of each paragraph. The very first words used often give us precious clues to the discourse function as well as to the contents of what follows.

For preparing the students to skim we ask them recognize the key sentences of a passage since it will show them that (a) one sentence usually sums up the gist of each paragraph and (b) this key sentence often

appears at the beginning of each paragraph. This activity involves the skills of identifying the main point or important information, and distinguishing the main idea from supporting details. In this type of exercises we ask the students to read the text quickly and, for example, match a paragraph with a summary suggested.

When we are trying to locate specifically required information, usually we need not read the whole text carefully. What we do is try to find in which paragraph the information we are looking for is likely to be, then read the paragraph with more attention, i. e. scanning.

For this type of exercise we prepare a long reading text with some questions related to the main points of the text, and ask the students to silently read the text and try to find the answer to the questions and insist on full answers.

Another way of training in scanning is to conduct an open discussion about the main points or events found. If the teacher can provide or create a life-like situation in which the students are exposed to adequate foreign language inputs, and motivate the students to use the foreign language while teaching them the language concepts, the students will greatly improved their communicative competence.

All reading materials are thoroughly selected according to the topic learnt. New vocabulary items seem to be better remembered if they are introduced in a context of a relevant text, a structured entity devoted to

one subject with which the students later associate a group of new words. So we asked the students to silently read a text and underlined the key words in it (mostly they are from vocabulary). This activity helps the students focus their attention on the most important lexical items. Following the activity the teacher and the students can clarify and justify the choices of certain words or phrases in a class discussion during which the students are encouraged to express their ideas, opinions, desires, emotions and feelings efficiently using new lexical items.

Silently reading skills are important, but we must not forget that the students need some more sound reading practice, too. Choosing a textbook with a sufficient amount of interesting, up-to-date reading material is what the students will certainly appreciate. It is noticed if the students like the text, they use the exact sentences and expressions from the text while retelling it. And that means that these expressions are no longer expressions appearing just in the text, but they become part of students' language. And as it was said "Language is best taught when it is being used to transmit messages, not when it is explicitly taught for conscious learning".

Although it is not easy to create adequate means to obtain real communication in language teaching, we should use the techniques we know to narrow the gap between linguistic competence and communicative competence.

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РОЗВИТОК НАВИЧОК ЧИТАННЯ ДЛЯ СТУДЕНТІВ 1-го КУРСУ НаУКМА

Стаття присвячена проблемам навчання навичкам читання (вміння визначати головну ідею тексту, вилучення потрібної інформації, швидкісна обробка великого тексту) для студентів 1-го курсу НаУКМА.