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DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS PROFESSIONALLY ORIENTED READING SKILLS IN THE SYSTEM OF POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION

Abstract Today, increased demands are being made on the level of foreign language teacher's professional competence. The article highlights the problems of developing EFL teacher's professionally oriented reading skills as an effective means of improving their foreign language communicative competence in the process of postgraduate education. The article names and describes the main types of professionally oriented reading with the purpose of their use and methods of teaching activities in the system of postgraduate education. It analyses the basic stages of the development of English language teacher's competence in the course of in-service training. The article substantiates the expedient strategies for the development of a teacher's foreign language professional reading during postgraduate studies. It also provides a list of exercises for developing the skills of introductory, study and search reading, which effectively contribute to the development of teachers' reading competence.

Keywords: professionally oriented foreign language reading, communicative competence, intercultural communication, communicative activity, development strategy

Research problem statement. The communicative abilities of English language teachers, which ensure a high level of their professional activity, are of



great importance nowadays, because success in pedagogical interaction directly depends on the peculiarities of the teacher's speech as a tool of pedagogical influence. At the same time, such linguistic characteristics of speech as literacy, accuracy, imagery, logic, coherence, expressiveness are of great importance, and teachers should constantly work on improving them, including during postgraduate studies.

Modern postgraduate education, which is designed to promote the continuous professional growth of a teacher, working with the professional competence of an English teacher, should focus on the development and improvement of intercultural(interlingual) communication skills, i.e. develop the ability of a language teacher to communicate at the intercultural level. Professionally oriented reading plays a significant role in the development of these skills.

Aim of the article. The purpose of our article is to identify certain strategies effective for teachers' professional English reading during their in-service training and to develop a set of exercises for reading professionally oriented texts.

Review of recent research. The methodological basis of our study was formed by scientific works in the field of the theory of speech activity and the development of the teacher's linguistic persona (O. Goikhman, I. Synytsia, O. Selivanova, F. Batsevych, O. Horoshkina, L. Matsko, M. Pentiliuk); methods of teaching foreign language professional reading (A. Boretska, N. Halskova, Zh. Chernysh, O. Yurkevych, T. Blahodatna, M. Davydova, R. Milrud, T. Hutchinson, A. Waters, etc.); methods of choosing a learning strategy (N. Borysko, O. Vetokhov, O. Kuzmenko, O. Kvasova, S. Nikolaieva, V. Perlova, I. Polakova, V. Perlova, I. Polak, T. Savytska, I. Samoiliukevych, N. Smetannikova, A. Khomytska, R. Garner, C. Griffiths, P. Gu, S. Derry, J. Maresh, R. Meyer, A. Simsek, K. Weinstein, J. Shaxmit and others).

Despite such a significant attention of scholars to this problem, it remains relevant due to the increasing status of foreign languages in modern conditions of cross-cultural communication, while the level of foreign language proficiency of teachers does not always meet modern requirements.

Presentation of findings. In our opinion, the use of the method of creative reading of professionally oriented texts is effective for the development of English teachers' foreign language communicative competence in postgraduate education.

Reading, as a type of communicative activity, occupies a leading position, because it is the basis for the development of speaking and writing skills; it is also related to listening, since both are based on perceptual and mental activities, caused by perception, analysis and synthesis. Reading is both an end and a means of language learning. It undoubtedly plays a positive role in mastering language material, since the mnemonic activity that accompanies the reading process ensures the memorisation of language units, both known and new. Thus, reading always enriches the teacher's vocabulary.

The process of memorisation is also important when reading, which can be spontaneous and purposeful. Involuntary memorisation develops in the process of rapid reading, when the reader's attention is fully focused on the content of the text (along with the content, he or she also memorises the language form). Purposeful memorisation is achieved when the reader's attention is consciously directed (with the help of the teacher's tasks or on his/her own initiative) not only to the content but also to the linguistic means of expressing it. Both types of memorisation in the process of reading ensure the accumulation of positive language experience as a prerequisite for correct oral communication (speaking) in a foreign language, because in texts, language units are repeated many times in different contexts, which clarifies their semantic boundaries and norms of use in the teacher's mind (consistency of lexical units, filling grammatical structures, correlation of both with different communicative situations).

In addition, reading is a universal and convenient means of obtaining necessary information. Modern teachers have to read a large number of texts in a foreign language to obtain the information they need. Therefore, English teachers have to be fluent in foreign language reading skills, and postgraduate training is designed to help teachers improve them.

Developing foreign language professional reading skills in postgraduate studies, one should be guided by the classification of reading types adopted in foreign language teaching methods.

Table 1

Types of reading

Reading type	Characteristics	Purpose and basis of focused activities	Learning activities	Levels of development of foreign language reading culture
1	2	3	4	5
Reading for gist (Skimming)	Reading with an understanding of the main content	Skills development based on the transition from externally unstable to internally stable motivation. Meaningful perception of the current reading level and preparing for the acquisition of new material	Perceptive and reproductive exercises (presentation, imitation, substitution, transformation)	Using translation in the process of reading: formulating an idea in the native language and then translating it. Beginner level.



1	2	3	4	5
Reading for detail (In-depth reading)	Reading with full comprehension, including details	Tracking the individual impact of a foreign language on a teacher's personality. Developing skills to retrieve information from an unfamiliar text	Reproductive exercises; text-based reproductive and productive exercises;	Reading with expressing opinion in the native language and subsequently in the foreign language. Intermediate level.
Reading for specific information (Scanning)	Reading with extraction of necessary (selective) information	Improvement of skills in accordance with the training model at the in-service training courses to develop the teacher's personal potential through foreign language reading. Improving skills and abilities to retrieve information from an unfamiliar text and use it in monologue and dialogue speaking	Productive and creative exercises; communicative activities; role-plays and text based discussions	Application of untranslated reading within a professional thesaurus, formulation of thoughts in a foreign language. High level

When working on the development of professionally oriented reading skills in postgraduate education, it is necessary to take into account the methodological prerequisites for the development of reading competence, correlating them with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, Professional Standards and Requirements. The most effective way to develop this competence is to develop it step by step, namely to improve a teacher's foreign language reading in three stages.

Table 2

Basic stages of teacher competence development in reading

Stage	Characteristics	Types of learning activities
Before reading	Building and/or updating (existing) background knowledge and creating motivation. Aimed at creating the appropriate linguistic and situational atmosphere for reading comprehension	a) discussing the topic of the lesson, debating or brainstorming on the topic; b) predicting the content of the text according to the title or the opening sentence; c) vocabulary work: explanation and pronunciation of geographical names, proper names, finding out the meaning of words (international, derivative, compound, converted), their translation (may include own options); d) imitation exercises and exercises on writing words on the board or cards with transcription; e) work with complex grammatical structures: analysis and translation.
While reading	Development of understanding phenomena in the process of reading. Aimed at reading the text and understanding it with a parallel communicative task	a) reading the questions and/or tasks for the text; b) reading the text slowly in silence to understand the main content c) fragments of commented reading aloud
After reading	Independent interpretation of phenomena based on the analysis of information contained in English-language texts and control of their understanding Aimed at controlling reading comprehension, checking the performance of a communicative task and the degree of information perception	a) discussing the main content of the text; b) choosing the most appropriate title from several suggested options, and from several evaluative judgements, the one that best reflects the reader's opinion about the text in general or a particular issue; c) finding and correcting wrong statements; d) briefly retelling the main content of the text; g) expressing one's own opinion about the content of the text, evaluating it.

Based on modern scientific research in the field of foreign language teaching, it can be argued that the development of a teacher's reading competence directly depends on the relevant strategy of professionally oriented reading in the system of postgraduate education. Let us try to identify the most appropriate ones:

1. Self-adaptation is one of the key strategies to be used in EFL reading. In teaching reading, the teacher's activity always begins with the activation of his/her previous life and language experience. The teacher adapts to the text through his/her own perception of reality and professional philological experience.

2. Reflection (reflective thinking) is an important aspect of vocationally oriented learning, involving drawing parallels between the topic of the text and one's own experience in order to fully understand the text. It activates the processes of memory, use of acquired knowledge and experience, planning and performance of actions, and evaluation of the outcomes.



3. Scanning - helps to better understand the topic of a professionally oriented text with the help of special graphic and textual indicators in order to decode the most important information needed to further understand the idea of the text.

4. Prediction and verification - is aimed at analysing interrelated elements of the text that follow from the previous content element, at understanding the changes that have taken place in the comprehension of the text. It has the features of strategic coherence, as it involves life and language experience and plans strategic processes to successfully achieve the reading outcomes. It is characterised by flexibility, as each step takes into account the previous content.

5. Visualisation is important for teachers, so when they read a text, they visualise it into an image that helps them improve their understanding of the text. Visualisation helps to focus, remember the information and apply this strategy even in situations which require creative and unusual solutions.

6. "Top-down and bottom-up methods are the most popular for teaching professional-oriented reading. The essence of this strategy is that the reader understands the text based on the individual meanings or grammatical characteristics of the main units of the text (e.g. individual words), from which the reader understands the text. The bottom-up strategy is considered to be more effective for philology teachers. For example, readers use their knowledge of the genre of the text to predict what the text will be about (top-down) and their understanding of affixation to guess the meaning of a word (bottom-up).

7. "Reader's diary" and "marked reading" have similarities, as taking notes while reading a vocationally oriented text helps teachers monitor comprehension by structuring information and main ideas. They help to identify important information and details of the text. These strategies are powerful tools for summarising, making connections and seeing the bigger picture of a text.

In order to develop competence in foreign language reading in accordance with the above-mentioned strategies of professionally oriented reading, it is advisable to use various exercises in advanced training courses to improve the skills of reading for gist, for details and for specific information. Among them we can name the following.

Exercises to develop the skills of foreign language reading for gist: 1) arrange the questions (headings) given in the instructions in a sequential order according to the content of the text; 2) choose the correct answer from multiple choice; 3) make an outline of the text; 4) find the answer to the question asked in the heading of the text; 5) come up with a title for the text; 6) make an oral/written retelling of the reading; 7) draw conclusions based on what you have read; 8) make an annotation to the text; 9) formulate the most interesting ideas that you have found in the text; 10) make illustrations, diagrams, schemes, etc. based on the text; 11) formulate an opinion on the expediency of using the readings in your professional activity.



Exercises for reading for detail: 1) arrange the facts in the text in order of importance; 2) identify the most important ideas in the text, justify your choice; 3) add your own information to the text without compromising the compositional integrity of the text; 4) re-read the abridged version of the text, filling in the missing words (cloze test); 5) formulate questions to the main parts of the text; 6) make an annotation to the text; 7) write the thesis of the text; 8) write a review of the text; 9) translate the text.

Exercises to develop reading for specific information skills: 1) identify the topic and idea of the text; 2) justify the choice of the title; 3) read and compare two texts on the same topic, identify similarities and differences; 4) determine the relevance of the annotation, make the necessary changes to it; 5) formulate the author's idea, arguing with examples from the text; 6) divide the text according to the plan you have made; 7) look through the illustrations to the text, identify the illustrated episodes in the text; 8) formulate a summary of the text, comparing it with your own experience.

Here we demonstrate some examples of above-mentioned activities.

Multiple choice activity

The Creators of Grammar

No student of a foreign language needs to be told that grammar is complex. By changing word sequences and by adding a range of auxiliary verbs and suffixes, we are able to communicate tiny variations in meaning. We can turn a statement into a question, state whether an action has taken place or is soon to take place, and perform many other word tricks to convey subtle differences in meaning. Nor is this complexity inherent to the English language. All languages, even those of so-called 'primitive' tribes have clever grammatical components. The Cherokee pronoun system, for example, can distinguish between 'you and I', 'several other people and I' and 'you, another person and I'. In English, all these meanings are summed up in the one, crude pronoun 'we'. Grammar is universal and plays a part in every language, no matter how widespread it is. So the question which has baffled many linguists is - who created grammar?

At first, it would appear that this question is impossible to answer. To find out how grammar is created, someone needs to be present at the time of a language's creation, documenting its emergence. Many historical linguists are able to trace modern complex languages back to earlier languages, but in order to answer the question of how complex languages are actually formed, the researcher needs to observe how languages are started from scratch. Amazingly, however, this is possible.

Some of the most recent languages evolved due to the Atlantic slave trade. At that time, slaves from a number of different ethnicities were forced to work together under colonizer's rule. Since they had no opportunity to learn each other's



languages, they developed a make-shift language called a pidgin. Pidgins are strings of words copied from the language of the landowner. They have little in the way of grammar, and in many cases, it is difficult for a listener to deduce when an event happened, and who did what to whom. [A] *Speakers need to use circumlocution in order to make their meaning understood.* [B] *Interestingly, however, all it takes for a pidgin to become a complex language is for a group of children to be exposed to it at the time when they learn their mother tongue.* [C] *Slave children did not simply copy the strings of words uttered by their elders, they adapted their words to create a new, expressive language.* [D] *It included standardised word orders and grammatical markers that existed in neither the pidgin language, nor the language of the colonizers.* Complex grammar systems which emerge from pidgins are termed creoles, and they are invented by children.

1. In paragraph 1, why does the writer include information about the Cherokee language?

A. To show how simple, traditional cultures can have complicated grammar structures (correct)

B. To show how English grammar differs from Cherokee grammar

C. To prove that complex grammar structures were invented by the Cherokees.

D. To demonstrate how difficult it is to learn the Cherokee language

2. What can be inferred about the slaves' pidgin language?

A. It contained complex grammar.

B. It was based on many different languages.

C. It was difficult to understand, even among slaves. (correct)

D. It was created by the land-owners.

3. In paragraph 3, where can the following sentence be placed?

“It included standardised word orders and grammatical markers that existed in neither the pidgin language, nor the language of the colonizers.”

A. [A]

B. [B]

C. [C]

D. [D] (correct)

4. ‘From scratch’ in paragraph 2 is closest in meaning to:

A. from the very beginning (correct)

B. in simple cultures

C. by copying something else

D. by using written information [9]



Matching rubrics with the text

Read the text below Match choices (A-H) to (11-16). There are two choices you do not need to use.

College Directory

Wells College educates women to think critically, reason wisely, and act humanely as they cultivate meaningful lives. Through our academic program, residential atmosphere, and community activities, you'll learn and practice the ideals of the liberal arts.

University of Pittsburg Bradford. Earn a world-renowned degree in a personalized environment. Work with professors who will know your name and your goals. Choose from 41 majors and many research, internship and study-abroad opportunities.

University of Rhode Island has a great major called "Writing and Rhetoric." Prepare yourself for a career as a journalist, a novelist, an advertising copywriter, a public relations professional, or an English teacher! You'll love our beautiful campus located minutes from RI's gorgeous beaches.

University of Dayton. Discover our community: a friendly campus, technology-enhanced learning, challenging academics, competitive athletics and a strong Catholic tradition.

Cogswell College. Launch a fun, rewarding career in special effects, animation, scripts, music and sound in movies, video games and high tech. Graduates move up to Cisco, LucasArts, Pixar, Disney, EA and other upmarket firms.

University of Alabama. UA has a rich tradition of excellence in academics, student life and sports. Ranked in the top 50 public universities surveyed by U.S. News & World Report; 9 undergraduate degree-granting schools and colleges; 20:1 student-teacher ratio.

Which university _____?

- maintains a religious atmosphere
- guarantees prestigious employment
- is gender specific
- offers studies overseas



- provides online learning
- focuses on ecological issues
- trains for working at school
- has a high official recognition [10]

Open Cloze Activity

For questions 1-8, read the text below and think of the word which fits each gap. Use only **one** word in each gap.

Taste

Taste is (1) ... simply the preserve of a tiny aristocracy, of the court culture of the European, Abbasid or Chinese past or the ‘foodie’ cutting-edge of the present. In the social history of ordinary people, calorie intake, the threat of famine and the supply of urban centres are among the topics (2) ... have given us (3) ... idea of the fragility and difficulty of pre-industrial life. The relevance of the history of food in its (4) ... basic sense needs (5) ... justification.

The exchange of products resulting (6) ... the discovery of the New World, the dependence of societies (7) ... one overwhelmingly important food source, or the impact of modern warfare on civilian diet (8) ... all clearly major topics. In the mid-twentieth century historians’ interest in the conditions of society, and particularly the history of ordinary people, inevitably involved questions of how peasants or workers lived in the past; how well or ill-nourished they were; how they coped with the unpredictability of harvests, food supply and prices.

Keys: 1. not; 2. that/which; 3. an; 4. most; 5. no; 6. from; 7. on; 8. are [11]

Missing Sentences/Parts of Sentences/Paragraphs Activity

You are going to read an extract from a magazine article about Macquarie Island. Six paragraphs have been removed from the extract. Choose from the paragraphs A – G the one which fits each gap (1 – 6). There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use.

Macquarie Island

Journalist Matthew Denholm joins a group of scientists, attempting to save Macquarie Island, which lies halfway between Australia and Antarctica.

I am stumbling, blinded by tiny missiles of ice and snow driven horizontally into my face by a howling gale. One minute I’m blown backwards. The next I’m leaping skyward in undignified panic as a foot narrowly misses an outraged elephant seal. Squinting painfully through torchlight, I’ve little hope of seeing the beasts.

1. _____

Later, inside a cosy hut, sporting a patch over the sorer of my eyes, I have to admit that it probably is. This is, after all, the sub-Antarctic. Or to be precise, Macquarie Island: a sliver of land conjured abruptly from the vast wilderness of the Southern Ocean. The darkest, coldest months are generally the quietest time of year for human activity here, but this year is different. I'm with a team of scientists who are undertaking a seemingly impossible task: to rid the entire island of every rabbit, rat and mouse.

2. _____

Next morning, I abruptly change my mind, however, when I awake to a view that justifies the three-day voyage to this remote outpost of Australia. After overnight snowfalls the island is painted white, from highland plateaus, with frozen lakes, to rocky black sand and pebble shore. All glistens in rare sub-Antarctic sunshine. Besides, the previous afternoon's discomforts were entirely our own fault.

3. _____

The delay while we doubled back made it impossible to reach the hut before dusk. I had also blundered, deciding snow goggles were unnecessary. We had been taught a valuable lesson. While officially part of Australia, this island is a different world. Different rules apply. Every move must be planned and precautions taken because of the dangers posed by climate and terrain.

4. _____

This extreme isolation means no activity is easy on the island. Our first challenge was getting ashore as there is no safe anchorage. But when we eventually reached the beach, I could instantly see that the island's reputation as 'the Galápagos of the south' is justified. Over the next few days, seals, penguins and a host of seabirds are a constant presence. As in the Galápagos Islands, some species are abundant – there are an estimated 100,000 seals and four million penguins. Though hunted in the past, these days the main threat to the island's fauna comes not from man but from our legacy.

5. _____

Unaccustomed to the herbivores' teeth, the island flora has been overgrazed and reduced to stubble. The hills and plateaus are pock-marked with holes and soft surfaces are undermined by their burrows. On this treeless island, the overgrazing has also left the homes of native birds exposed. Petrel and albatross chicks are thus more vulnerable to predation and the harsh elements. The devastation reached such a point that in 2007 the World Heritage Convention discussed whether the island should lose its World Heritage status.

6. _____

However, the status was also conferred because of its 'outstanding natural beauty and aesthetic importance'. Given that the wild hillsides that should be lushly covered are bare, and are animated not by the movement of wind in tussock but by



rabbits running amok, it is not surprising that the world was beginning to ask whether the description still applied.

A This is mainly in the form of rabbits. Introduced in 1877 as a food source, they took to the island with gusto. Recent estimates of the rabbit population, before the eradication program began, ranged from 100,000 to 150,000.

B It's a realisation that makes all the more impressive the endeavours of the first explorers to come here. Here at Brothers Point, perched on a headland off the island's east coast, we could be the last humans on Earth. In a geographical sense, we very nearly are.

C The walk – just under 10km from the research station to the cabin – wasn't meant to be in darkness. Some time after setting out, however, my photographer realised he had left a piece of camera equipment behind.

D It's one of the most ambitious programs of its type ever attempted. A worthy project indeed, but as the intense winds rage outside, I can empathise with Captain Douglass, an early visitor to the island. Arriving in 1822, Douglass called Macquarie 'the most wretched place'.

E The resultant landslips have devastating consequences. They have harmed hundreds of penguins as well as destroying nesting sites leaving local wildlife at risk. I begin to realise just how damaged this wilderness is.

F At night, they are indistinguishable from the rocks that cover the ground; only their gurgling barks tell me when to jump. As I lose feeling in my fingers, numbed by glacial temperatures, I ask myself: Is this what I sailed to the bottom of the world for? G Macquarie achieved the listing 10 years earlier, partly in recognition of the fact that it is a geological freak. The island is ocean floor forced to the surface by the convergence of two tectonic plates – an ongoing process. [12]

A wide range of these and similar activities are available on the Internet or various textbooks.

Conclusions. To sum up, we can claim that:

- the process of developing and improving teachers' foreign language professional reading in the system of postgraduate education should take into account the main provisions of language theory, andragogy, psychology, sociology and other related scientific fields;
- the development of a foreign language reading skills increases the ability of teachers to communicate interculturally;
- reading is both a means and a method of language learning; it enriches vocabulary and provides the accumulation of language experience as a prerequisite for correct oral speaking;
- professionally oriented texts are at the same time a source of information, an object of reading and a model for developing and improving oral and written communication skills;

- the text, its content and reading strategies which are relevant to the individual abilities of teachers are important means of improving a foreign language teacher's communicative competence.

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