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HOW TO INCREASE COMPREHENSION THROUGH CLOSE READING?

Annotation

This article discusses how to improve reading comprehension through close reading, providing general information about the importance of close reading and various methods of close reading to improve reading comprehension. This article discusses and demonstrates the importance of close reading in teaching and learning foreign languages, along with suggestions and solutions from leading experts.

Key words: Linguistic skills, regular reading, comprehension, close reading, analytical skills, interpretation, vocabulary acquisition, scaffolding, pedagogical tool.

YAQINDAN O‘QISH ORQALI TUSHUNISHNI QANDAY OSHIRISH MUMKIN?

Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqolada yaqindan o‘qish orqali o‘qib tushunishni qanday oshirish mumkinligi muhokama qilinib, unda yaqindan o‘qishning ahamiyati haqidagi umumiy ma’lumotlar va o‘qib tushunishni qanday oshirish bo‘yicha yaqindan o‘qishni turli usullari yoritilgan. Ushbu maqolada etakchi mutaxassislarining takliflari va yechimlari, hamda chet tillarni o‘rgatish va o‘rganishda yaqindan o‘qishning qanchalik muhimligi muhokama qilinadi va isbotlanadi.

Kalit so‘zlar: Lingvistik mahorat, muntazam o‘qish, tushunish, yaqindan o‘qish, tahlil qilish qobiliyati, izohlash, so‘z boyligini o‘zlashtirish, qo‘llab-quvvatlash, pedagogik vosita.

КАК МОЖНО УЛУЧШИТЬ ПОНИМАНИЕ ПОСРЕДСТВОМ ВНИМАТЕЛЬНОГО ЧТЕНИЯ?

Аннотация

В этой статье обсуждается, как улучшить понимание прочитанного с помощью внимательного чтения, а также предоставляется общая информация о важности внимательного чтения и различных методах внимательного чтения для улучшения понимания прочитанного. В данной статье обсуждаются и демонстрируются предложения и решения ведущих экспертов, а также важность внимательного чтения при преподавании и изучении иностранных языков.

Ключевые слова: Лингвистические навыки, регулярное чтение, понимание, внимательное чтение, аналитические навыки, интерпретация, приобретение словарного запаса, поддержка, педагогический инструмент.

Introduction. We all know that after the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. M. Mirziyoyev dated May 19, 2021 No. PR-5117 “On measures to bring the popularization of foreign language learning in the Republic of Uzbekistan to a qualitatively new level”, attention in our country is increasing not only to the teaching and learning of foreign languages, but also to the teaching of various disciplines in foreign languages. In recent years, the trust in specialists who can read and interpret information in English in their fields, that is, information in social networks, scientific journals, and various books in foreign languages, and who can write their scientific works in English related to the field, is increasing day by day. This issue has become one of the most crucial tasks of the current time. [1]

Reading is highly important for improving other linguistic skills such as writing, speaking, and listening. When we read, we are exposed to new vocabulary, correct grammar, and different sentence structures, which help us use the language more accurately and confidently. Reading also improves our understanding of how ideas are organized and expressed, making it easier to write clearly and speak fluently. In addition, reading stories or articles helps us recognize the natural flow of conversation and the meaning of words in context, which is useful for both listening and speaking. Overall, regular reading is a powerful way to strengthen all areas of language learning. So, comprehension is very important when we read. And reading comprehension is

widely recognized as a foundational skill in education, serving as a critical determinant of academic achievement and lifelong learning. It refers to the ability to understand, interpret, analyze, and evaluate written texts. Effective comprehension involves more than the mere decoding of words; it requires readers to construct meaning by integrating textual information with prior knowledge, making inferences, and critically engaging with content. As such, reading comprehension is not only a cognitive process but also a strategic and interactive one, essential for success across disciplines.

Despite its central role, many learners struggle with deep and sustained comprehension, often approaching texts at a surface level without engaging in critical interpretation. Traditional approaches to reading instruction, which may emphasize passive reading or rote memorization, have been shown to inadequately foster higher-order thinking skills. In response to these limitations, educators and scholars have increasingly turned to close reading as an instructional strategy aimed at enhancing comprehension.

Literature review. What is close reading? Close reading is a pedagogical method that encourages meticulous, text-based analysis through multiple readings, careful annotation, and sustained attention to language, structure, and meaning. Rooted in the literary criticism of the early 20th century—particularly the New Criticism movement—close reading originally emerged as a technique for analyzing

literary texts without relying on external contexts such as authorial intent or historical background. However, its application has since evolved beyond literature into general education and literacy development. In contemporary pedagogy, close reading has gained renewed significance, particularly with the rise of standards-based education reforms that emphasize critical thinking and textual evidence. It is now employed not only in English Language classrooms but also across subjects to support disciplinary literacy. Modern close reading practices are often aligned with constructivist theories of learning, which view students as active constructors of meaning through deep engagement with texts. As such, close reading is increasingly seen as a powerful tool for promoting comprehension, fostering independent thinking, and developing the analytical skills necessary for academic and civic life [2].

Close reading is especially important in learning foreign languages because it encourages students to engage deeply with a text, going beyond simply understanding the basic meaning of words. By carefully analyzing vocabulary, sentence structure, and the organization of ideas, learners gain a better grasp of both the explicit and implicit messages within a passage. This process involves reading and rereading, annotating, and asking questions about the text, which helps students discover new language patterns, improve comprehension, and build critical thinking skills. For language learners, close reading also provides valuable practice in interpreting context, recognizing nuances, and expanding academic vocabulary, all of which are essential for mastering a new language. Ultimately, close reading transforms passive reading into an active learning experience, supporting deeper understanding and more effective communication in the foreign language.

Conventional reading strategies often prioritize breadth over depth, emphasizing the completion of reading tasks rather than critical engagement with the text. As a result, students may develop superficial reading habits, such as skimming or paraphrasing, without cultivating the analytical abilities necessary for deep understanding. This problem is further compounded by the growing cognitive demands of modern curricula, which require students to navigate dense and discipline-specific texts across multiple content areas [3].

Close reading has emerged as a promising strategy in the context, offering a structured approach that invites readers to slow down, examine textual details, and engage in repeated readings to uncover deeper meanings. While the theoretical foundations of close reading are well established, its practical impact on students' comprehension abilities warrants further empirical investigation.

Close reading is a powerful strategy for enhancing language comprehension, especially when dealing with

complex or challenging texts. Here are several ways close reading techniques can be applied to improve understanding:

1. Multiple Focused Readings

Close reading involves reading the same text multiple times, each with a different focus. The first reading is to understand what the text says (the literal meaning), the second examines how the text conveys its message (structure, language, tone), and the third explores deeper meanings and implications. This layered approach helps students move beyond surface understanding to deeper comprehension.

2. Chunking and Analyzing Text

Breaking the text into manageable sections allows students to focus on key details, vocabulary, and structures. By chunking the text, students can reread and analyze difficult passages, clarify confusing points, and draw connections within the text.

3. Questioning and Discussion

Close reading encourages students to ask rigorous, analytical questions such as "What does this quote mean?", "Why did the author use this word?", and "How does this event affect the overall meaning?". Discussing these questions with peers or in writing deepens understanding and promotes critical thinking.

4. Vocabulary Development

Close reading is particularly effective for vocabulary acquisition. By encountering new words in context and reflecting on their meaning and usage, students enhance their vocabulary skills and grasp the nuances of language. Teachers can highlight high-utility academic words and teach strategies for deducing meaning from context.

5. Text Structure and Author's Purpose

Analyzing how a text is organized and why the author made certain choices helps students understand not just what is said, but how and why it is said. This includes examining syntax, metaphors, transitions, and the use of evidence.

6. Graphic Organizers and Note-taking

Using graphic organizers during close reading helps students organize their thoughts, track main ideas, and synthesize information from the text. This visual support aids comprehension and retention.

7. Building Background Knowledge

Before close reading, ensuring students have the necessary background knowledge to understand the main ideas of the text is crucial. This scaffolding allows students to engage more deeply with the content.

8. Active and Reflective Reading

Close reading transforms students from passive readers into active analysts. They learn to slow down, annotate, and reflect on the text, which fosters independent reading skills and a "language sense" that applies across various contexts.

Summary Table: Close Reading Techniques and Their Benefits	
Technique	How It Improves Comprehension
Multiple readings	Deepens understanding on different levels
Chunking text	Makes complex texts manageable
Analytical questioning	Promotes critical thinking
Vocabulary focus	Expands and deepens language knowledge
Analyzing structure/purpose	Reveals how meaning is constructed
Graphic organizers	Supports organization and synthesis
Building background knowledge	Prepares students for deeper engagement
Active annotation/reflective reading	Encourages independent, thoughtful reading

By systematically applying these close reading techniques, students can uncover layers of meaning, expand their vocabulary, and develop stronger overall language comprehension skills[2].

Research Methodology. The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of close reading as a strategy to enhance reading comprehension. Specifically, the study seeks to explore how structured close reading activities influence students' ability to interpret texts critically, identify implicit meanings, and construct evidence-based responses. By

analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data, the research aims to provide pedagogically relevant insights into the role of close reading in promoting deeper comprehension across educational settings.

This study employs a qualitative research design grounded in interpretivist paradigms, aiming to explore the nuanced processes through which close reading contributes to the enhancement of reading comprehension among university students. Qualitative methods are particularly suited to this investigation, as they allow for in-depth exploration of

participants' experiences, perceptions, and meaning-making strategies. Rather than seeking generalizable outcomes, the study is concerned with understanding the subjective and context-dependent nature of reading comprehension as it unfolds in authentic educational settings.

The choice of a qualitative design also aligns with the study's goal of examining not only whether comprehension improves through close reading, but how students engage with texts, what cognitive and emotional responses they exhibit, and how instructors perceive changes in students' analytical abilities. These insights, which are often obscured in purely quantitative designs, are essential for informing pedagogical practices and curricular innovation in higher education.

The primary method of data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews with student participants, conducted at two key points: prior to the intervention (pre-intervention interviews) and after the completion of the close reading sessions (post-intervention interviews). These interviews were designed to elicit students' perceptions of their reading practices, challenges in understanding complex texts, and the strategies they employed before and after exposure to close reading. The flexible structure of the interviews allowed for probing questions and participant-led elaboration, ensuring rich and context-sensitive responses. By grounding the analysis in students' own voices and classroom experiences, the study offers a contextualized and deeply interpretive account of how close reading fosters reading comprehension in higher education. [4]

Analysis and results. Interpretation of Findings

The findings of this study highlight that close reading is a highly effective pedagogical tool for fostering deeper engagement with texts and enhancing reading comprehension among university students. By encouraging students to read actively and critically, close reading strategies promoted a richer understanding of the material, enabling participants to engage with both the literal and inferential aspects of texts. As observed, students reported feeling a more personal connection to the texts, experiencing reading as an intellectual process rather than a passive task.

Effective close reading strategies, such as annotation, rereading, and questioning, were pivotal in achieving these outcomes. Annotation, for instance, allowed students to mark important textual elements, identify key arguments, and note personal responses or insights. This practice not only helped them track their thoughts but also deepened their ability to reflect on the material in a more organized manner. Similarly, the practice of rereading—particularly when paired with targeted questioning—enabled students to discover nuances and gain a clearer understanding of complex concepts or rhetorical strategies. As students became more proficient in these techniques, they reported a greater sense of agency in interpreting texts.

Questioning, in particular, emerged as a vital strategy for developing inferential and critical thinking skills. Students were prompted to ask themselves and their peers questions such as "What is the author's purpose here?" or "What is implied, but not directly stated?" These activities helped them not only comprehend the content more effectively but also evaluate and challenge the text, fostering higher-order thinking.

These strategies aligned with prior research on active reading techniques, reinforcing the idea that reading comprehension is not simply about decoding text, but also about engaging in a dialogue with the text. The active participation encouraged by close reading fosters the development of a more nuanced understanding of texts, which is essential in an academic context where critical thinking is paramount. The results of this study resonate strongly with

existing research on the importance of active reading strategies in improving comprehension. Prior studies have consistently shown that close reading improves not only comprehension but also critical thinking. According to expert's study, for instance, underscores that questioning and re-reading are among the most effective strategies for fostering deep comprehension, a finding supported by the current research [5].

Additionally, the findings from this study align with schema theory by Anderson, which posits that readers activate prior knowledge and background information to build new understandings while reading. The close reading process encourages students to continually integrate new insights with their pre-existing knowledge, leading to more sophisticated interpretations. Students' increased engagement and ability to make inferences are consistent with studies that highlight how close reading can facilitate the development of deeper cognitive and interpretive skills [4].

However, one key difference observed in this study is the extent to which confidence in academic identity improved. Many students expressed a sense of empowerment, viewing themselves as more capable and knowledgeable readers. This finding is consistent with research by Kucer, who notes that active reading strategies help students develop metacognitive awareness, boosting both their comprehension and self-efficacy. This study has underscored the profound impact that close reading can have on improving reading comprehension and enhancing critical thinking skills among university students. Through a detailed investigation into the effectiveness of close reading strategies—such as annotation, rereading, and questioning—it has been demonstrated that these techniques promote not only a deeper engagement with texts but also a greater capacity for critical analysis and inference. The results revealed significant improvements in students' comprehension scores and their ability to extract, interpret, and critically evaluate information from complex texts[6].

Conclusion. In light of these findings, it is clear that close reading should be integrated as a core practice within educational curricula, especially at the university level, where students are often tasked with engaging with challenging, multi-faceted texts. For educators and curriculum designers, the incorporation of close reading strategies offers a pathway to not only improve comprehension but to cultivate critical thinking and analytical skills that are essential in the academic and professional spheres.

Thus, we recommend that educational practices emphasize the development of active reading habits across all disciplines. Educators should incorporate structured close reading exercises—featuring regular annotation, rereading, and questioning—into their teaching routines to facilitate deeper learning. Furthermore, training in these strategies should be provided not only in literature courses but also in interdisciplinary contexts, where the ability to engage with complex materials is crucial.

In conclusion, the power of close reading lies in its ability to foster a holistic approach to comprehension, encouraging students to engage with texts actively and critically. As educational institutions continue to prioritize critical literacy and the development of higher-order thinking skills, close reading presents an essential tool in preparing students for the demands of academic and professional success. By embracing this approach, educators can ensure that students not only understand what they read but also think deeply and critically about the material, equipping them for lifelong learning and intellectual growth.

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