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MONITORING TECHNIQUES IN THE INSTRUCTION OF READING ACQUISITION

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Abstract: This paper investigates test-based assessment in reading literary texts. A comprehensive typology of test tasks is proposed, serving both assessment and learning purposes. The study highlights the inclusion of emotional-volitional content in tests for enhanced comprehension. Challenging tasks related to identifying themes underscore the need for improved comprehension strategies. The dual role of tests as evaluative tools and educational aids is emphasized, advocating their strategic integration to promote better understanding in students.

INTRODUCTION

The most relevant issue for the methodology of teaching foreign languages is the development of reliable, practical, and rational techniques for instructing the fundamental forms of communicative activity, particularly reading.

Reading serves both as an objective and a means of learning. As an objective, it aims to shape, develop, and refine the skill of extracting information from texts of any style and genre. As a means, it involves performing diverse exercises. One must read the exercise and comprehend the task. In order to summarize the text (as well as complete other associated exercises), reading it is essential. Teaching language without relying on reading can be justified only for preschool children.

A compulsory stage in the educational process of a systemic-structural formation is the assessment of the results of its activities. Thus, the success of learning to read, as well as any form of speech activity, is determined by the presence of effective methods for assessing its level of development, and the search for such methods.

The significance of this matter is undoubtedly determined by the fact that one of the primary objectives of learning a foreign language is to acquire the ability to comprehend written speech in that language. According to the requirements of the foreign language curriculum, high school graduates should possess skills in reading, comprehension, and extracting information from foreign language texts. In the upper grades of specialized high schools and language universities, students are presented with texts of various functional styles, including excerpts from literary works, which are, as known, subject to intensive reading. The outcome of this type of reading involves a complete (100% completeness) and accurate comprehension of all aspects - both main (facts whose misunderstanding results in the loss of narrative thread, author's logical reasoning/argumentation) and secondary - facts contained in the text. However, as numerous research data show, the ability to work independently with the text is imperfect among first-year students. One of the reasons for this is the inadequacy of control as a condition for effectively managing reading instruction.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In light of this, the practical significance of optimizing the control of students' comprehension of foreign literary texts becomes important. The success of control requires specific adequate methods for its implementation, finding forms that would allow obtaining data related to the objects of control. Unfortunately, traditionally accepted methods of assessing the level of reading proficiency in a foreign language within schools do not provide the opportunity to gather such data. Typically, this assessment is carried out through various forms of content reproduction and/or translation of the text into the native language, predominantly in oral form. In other words, it is aimed at checking the understanding of the read material without clear differentiation of the expected degree of completeness and accuracy of understanding. The main drawbacks of traditional comprehension assessment techniques include: the inadequacy of the employed methods to the controlled activity, subjectivity in evaluation, lack of cost-effectiveness, and insufficiently high educational function of assessment.

Educators' attention is increasingly drawn to the methodology of testing for assessment. This interest is entirely explainable - several features are inherent in the organization of tests, providing grounds to consider their application as one of the ways to enhance the effectiveness of the learning process.

In our view, the significance of using test-based comprehension assessment for foreign literary texts can be summarized as follows:

1. Test items represent a kind of problem-solving, cognitive, and linguistic reproduction tasks, which activate students' cognitive processes.
2. Tests stimulate interest in the process of reading in a foreign language, fostering positive emotions due to the visual representation of each learner's achievements.

3. These tasks provide the opportunity for each student to engage with the text at a suitable pace and complete assignments in a more convenient order.

4. Test items require multiple readings of the text, compelling each student to perform every exercise.

5. Despite the volume of the analyzed text, completing such tasks takes a minimal amount of time as tests allow simultaneous assessment of the entire class/group, enabling their administration in nearly any lesson.

6. Tests contribute to the development of the necessary structure and reading algorithm stereotypes.

Overall, utilizing test-based comprehension assessment holds value for its ability to activate critical thinking, maintain interest, allow personalized pacing, encourage repeated reading, and efficiently manage assessment in the classroom.

Grading is carried out according to pre-established rules that are known to the students and are independent of the teacher's subjective judgment. During the test, all students are placed on equal footing - they work at the same time with the same volume and complexity of textual material, which eliminates the influence of factors such as luck or misfortune on the assessment of their answers.

For assessing comprehension of literary texts in the process of reading in a foreign language, the methodology primarily employs recognition-based tests in the following variations:

- Tests with the choice of the correct answer from two provided options.
- Tests with the choice of the correct answer from several given options.
- Tests involving the grouping of facts.
- Tests involving the elimination of extraneous words and various other types.

These test variations provide a structured and objective way to evaluate students' comprehension of foreign literary texts, offering a fair assessment that is not influenced by chance or subjectivity.

Analyzing the existing classifications of reading test types, despite their diversity, it became evident that most of them are categorized based on formal, objective, and functional criteria. In terms of content-related aspects, control-test tasks oriented toward full comprehension of content and focusing on the control object are classified as tests measuring the development of linguistic skills, and in terms of the direction of the test tasks, they fall under discrete tests. These classifications are not detailed enough and require expansion. Consequently, we have developed a typology of test types based on content-related features, wherein the following types of tests have been identified:

1. Tests aimed at assessing comprehension of emotional-volitional information.
2. Tests aimed at assessing comprehension of logical information.
3. Tests for understanding literary information.

4. Tests for understanding text structure, word meanings.
5. Tests for summarizing information.
6. Tests for identifying information.

According to this classification, each type of test is directed at different reading skills that learners acquire, and these skills become the objects of assessment. This fact should also be reflected in the alternatives provided in the tests. Tests designed to assess comprehension of literary works should include alternatives related not only to factual content but also to the style of the work and its conceptual framework. Only such a combination of alternative options, in our view, will contribute to revealing the artistic concept of the work. The number of groups of alternatives associated with factual content will be determined by significant milestones in the content, covering all crucial aspects of the text: descriptions of character actions, thoughts and emotions, events, circumstances, outcomes of actions, and so on.

Based on our conducted research and considering the shortcomings of existing classifications, a typology of test tasks aimed at assessing comprehension of content in literary texts during reading has been compiled.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Experimental work with tests of this type allows for a refinement of their role within the reading instruction system. It has been found that tests serve not only as a means of comprehension assessment but also as important and effective tools for learning. Engaging with the linguistic and "factual" material from the test, involuntarily memorized and recalled during the test tasks, learners construct their expressions more logically and substantively based on the reading material. When reading and working with the tests, learners perform educational actions in a specific sequence: they attempt to explain chapter titles, identify the main idea, create a schematic representation of the content, form a plan, and more. Tests are not only a means of assessment but also of education, as the testing situation contains anchors that guide the learner's attention and educational activity. The use of tests has also shown that incorporating tasks analyzing emotional-evaluative and implicitly expressed information within the text enhances their educational effect.

The most suitable and flexible tests for teaching comprehension of literary texts should be multiple-choice tests with options for choosing one among alternatives, with cross-selection, including double options, and grouping. These tests should assess comprehension of logical information, emotional-volitional aspects, explicit and implicit meanings, understanding of the theme, idea of the literary text, and include tasks analyzing titles, and more. They should not only assess the correctness, completeness, and depth of understanding but also educate. Therefore, they should incorporate tasks based on semantic analysis of excerpts from the text and tasks related to semantic interpretation.

Regarding the complexity of test completion by students depending on the direction of the test towards specific controlled skills, conclusions have been drawn that in the developed tests, the highest levels of difficulty were noted in tasks related to determining the theme and idea of the literary work. This is due to insufficient attention given to this type of text work in school. Additionally, the identification of emotional-volitional information, which is always challenging to understand, posed difficulties for the students. Tests of this kind are the most challenging for learners, as they require more rigorous text analysis. Based on this data, it can be inferred that after such tests, a brief summary of the results and discussions of the made mistakes are necessary. This allows learners to make corrections in their understanding of the material, which also constitutes an educative function of the tests. The tasks that were least difficult for students were those involving identifying individual facts from the text.

It's evident that test-based assessment is not the sole method for evaluating students' knowledge and skills. There are various exercises as mentioned above. However, using test-based assessment is justified in higher grades, particularly for students preparing for centralized testing. Tasks related to textual comprehension are where most mistakes are made by applicants.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the present study has explored and addressed the intricacies of employing test-based assessment as a method for evaluating comprehension in the context of reading literary texts. Through a meticulous analysis of existing classifications and their limitations, we developed a comprehensive typology of test tasks that cater to a range of reading skills and objectives. These tests not only serve as effective tools for assessing comprehension but also as crucial instruments for fostering learning.

Our experimental work unveiled the significance of incorporating emotional-volitional and implicitly expressed information into tests, enhancing their educational impact. By engaging with linguistic and factual material presented in these tests, learners not only enhance their comprehension but also refine their articulation and expression.

In essence, this study contributes to refining the approach to comprehension assessment and underscores the dual role of tests as assessment tools and educational aids. By considering the nuances of test design, incorporation of various comprehension aspects, and alignment with educational objectives, educators can harness the full potential of test-based assessment to nurture profound comprehension skills in students.

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