AUTHOR’S COURSE «HOT ENGLISH» FOR FUTURE MANAGERS: FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF EXPERIMENTAL DEVELOPMENT

The article deals with some questions concerning the model of the formation professionally oriented competence in English reading of future managers and with the problem of the development of strategic skills in ESP reading. The necessity of students’ mastering the above-mentioned competence has been grounded. The term “professionally oriented competence in English reading of future managers” has been defined. This model falls into the following stages: planning, inferring, hypothesis testing, revising hypotheses. The author gives a full description of the modelling. The reading skills are suggested to be developed with the help of corresponding exercises and tasks. It has been proved that pre-reading exercises aim to form strategic skills of planning; reading exercises and tasks enable students to use reading strategies of inferring and compression while post-reading tasks help them to develop strategies of evaluating and correcting. The research results can be used for further studies of the problem. The principles of constructing the model of English reading competence: cyclicity, systematicity, professional orientation and stepwise learning are singled out. The stages of formation professionally oriented competence in English reading are substantiated. The means of forming foreign language competence in reading and ways of controlling its level of formation are determined. The linguistic characteristics of English financial and economic texts and psychological mechanisms of vocabulary have been determined. The linguodidactic model of developing English lexical competence of future financiers in the process of reading professionally oriented texts has been elaborated and the corresponding system of exercises has been developed. The criteria, evaluative indicators and levels of developing English reading competence of future managers in the process of reading professionally oriented texts have been defined.

Keywords: author’s course, experimental research study, future managers, high educational establishments, Hot English, metacognitive strategies in English reading comprehension.
Преподавателі, які з висновок предустрояної матеріалу читають документації урахуванням студентів використовують ефективні стратегії з урахуванням індивідуальних психологічних особливостей та цілей, аналізуючи ефективні стратегії, які студенти застосовують при читанні рідною мовою з метою перенесення вітчизняних умінь в іншомовний контекст засобами авторської дистанційного веб-кейсу «Hot English». Виокремлено етапи формування стратегічної компетентності у процесі читання щоразічних текстів з фаху, наведено приклади завдання, які показують варіювання на цих етапах. Ефективність розробленої методики формування англомовної професійно орієнтованої читацької компетентності переверено за допомогою начального, природного, відкритого, вертикально-горизонтального експерименту, а достовірність результатів — методами математичної статистики. Відзначено вагомість ідей і концепцій ефективності стратегії формування англомовної професійно орієнтованої читацької компетентності у майбутніх менеджерів як на аудиторних заняттях так і в пози межами аудиторії.

Ключові слова: авторський курс, експериментальне дослідження, майбутні менеджери, які навчаються на англійській мові.

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Авторський курс «Hot English» для будущих менеджеров: из опыта экспериментальной разработки

Основною целью нашего исследования является описание результатов экспериментального обучения будущих менеджеров чтению на английском языке с использованием метакогнитивных стратегий. Кроме того, результаты исследования можно использовать для анализа учебных материалов и разработки дидактических комплексов. Материалы авторского курса «Hot English» предназначены для обучения студентам адекватному восприятию и пониманию разных видов текстов. Преподаватели могут использовать нашу технологию с целью создания собственных стратегий для обучения пониманию текстов в процессе чтения. В статье рассматриваются вопросы, касающиеся модели формирования англоязычной профессионально ориентированной компетентности в чтении будущих менеджеров. Видимы принципы построения модели формирования читательской компетентности: цикличности, системности, профессиональной направленности и поэтапности обучения. Обоснованы этапы формирования англоязычной профессионально ориентированной компетентности в чтении. Определены средства формирования инновационной компетентности в чтении и способы контроля уровня ее сформированности.

Ключевые слова: авторский курс, экспериментальное исследование, будущие менеджеры, высшие учебные заведения, «Hot English», метакогнитивные стратегии в понимании английского языка.

The National Reading Panel described reading comprehension thus: Comprehension is a complex process ... often viewed as ‘the essence of reading.’ Reading comprehension is ... intentional thinking during which meaning is constructed through interactions between text and reader... The content of meaning is influenced by the text and by the reader’s prior knowledge and experience that are brought to bear on it [5; 6]. The problem of the twenty-first century, forming the reading comprehension research was summarized by two “blue ribbon” groups: National Reading Panel (2000) and the Reading Study Group (2002). Similarly, the Reading Study Group (2002) noted that reading comprehension involves four components: 1) the reader, 2) the text, 3) the activity, and 4) the situational context [2]. The first three essential components – the reader, the text, and the task – occur within the fourth component of reading comprehension – the situational context. The reader is the one doing the comprehending, and the text is the reading material (e.g., stories, nonfiction selections, etc.).
As reading is considered an important educational practice in academic settings, there have been numerous attempts to study the evolving nature of the notion, which is still being reconsidered in terms of new research findings (J. Bamford, E. Bernhardt, Z. Breznitz, R. Day and J. Bamford, W. Grabe, J. Hedgcock and D. Ferris, T. Hudson, K. Koda, K. Lems, L. Miller, T. Soro, K. Mokharti, I. S. P. Nation etc.). Specialists from different fields related to reading (psycholinguists, applied linguists, educational psychologists, foreign language teachers, experts in the field of reading) have been trying to analyse reading as a process, ability, competence, skill, and compose a reading model based on the ideas of goal-directedness, intentionality, integrity with other skills, author-reader relations (W. Kintsch, L. McNeil, C. Perfetti, K. Stanovich).

However, the analysis of modern scientific literature demonstrates that the methodology of teaching reading English professionally oriented texts to future managers with the base web-case has not been developed yet.

The activity refers to what kind of comprehension task, skill, strategy, or concept the reader is attempting to perform (e.g., discovering the author’s main idea, understanding a sequence of events, thinking about a character’s intent in a story, etc.).

The technology of forming English professionally oriented reading competence with using author’s combined distance courses by the students – future managers has not been the subject of a special study. Thus, the relevance of the study is caused by the needs of training specialists in management, able to accept moderated reading metacognitive strategies in foreign language. Experimental study at Zhytomyr State Technological University has developed an experimental pathway called “Hot English”, which we now use in forming reading competence in addition to the traditional pathway “English as a Foreign Language”. This new pathway is a response to the changes in the Ukrainian job market and internationally and includes an industrial placement experience with leading companies in USA and GB during last four years abroad.

By working with author’s course "Hot English" for future managers in small groups or pairs, students have gained experience in transferable competences in foreign language.

As stated in [4], reading skills play an important role in teaching English as a foreign language. Learners who have good reading ability will progress in their careers and their further studies. For those who study English as a foreign language, ability in English reading comprehension is a must. Future managers need reading comprehension to be able to continually increase their knowledge [5]. Reading is a type of interaction, which helps students to develop the ability to work in a group (listening, giving opinions, reaching agreements, etc.) and independently (time management and problem solving). They reflect on different learning strategies and continue learning outside the classroom. It helps future managers learn independently, self-evaluate the knowledge acquired, handle communication techniques on all levels and work in teams.

This author’s course “Hot English” takes students to the level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages of the Council of Europe. The content is geared towards the management profession. The course comprises 32 classroom hours and 16 combined distance MOODLE hours.

The purpose of this research is to describe the experience of experimental development in the author’s course contents “Hot English” with was used in the learning process and to characterize its linguistic content.

The research task is to describe the effectiveness of the suggested method by means of the natural, vertical and horizontal, open methodological experiment; and confirm the validity of the achieved results.

Three experimental groups consisted of 44 students – future managers at Zhytomyr State Technological University at the Faculty of Economics and Management during semester 2 of the 2017 academic year. The cluster random sampling technique was used in all three experimental groups. The research instruments were comprised of 16 lesson plans with added exercises on the distance learning platform MOODLE, an English reading comprehension ability test and an attitude questionnaire, which was called “Hot English”. The instruments in each model cycle of the experimental research consisted of a teaching observation form, a learning observation form, lesson plan quizzes, cycle quizzes and a student interview form. Percentage, mean, standard deviation and t-test for dependent samples were used to analyse data.
Three cycles of action research were employed in this experimental study. The students’ average pretest and posttest scores on English reading comprehension ability were 45.73 % and 81.07 %, respectively. The students’ English reading comprehension was found to be significantly higher after learning using metacognitive strategies.

The author’s course contents “Hot English” has been implemented in the context of a credit module training system and a modular rating system of evaluation. In accordance with the gradual complication of each subsequent the number of tasks for working with text in the Pre-Reading and Post-Reading stages increases.

We will dwell briefly on the final stage of Post-Reading. This step is aimed at verifying the text understanding, on the use of information in oral and written speech. The contents of this stage are receptive-reproductive and receptive-productive, reproductive and productive exercises. Following N. D. Galskova, we offer three groups of exercises at this stage [1, p. 214–220]. The first group of exercises has been associated with the reproduction of text material based on keywords and sentences, a shortened or simplified version of the text. Students are offered a task for such text processing: distribution of text into semantic milestones, plotting in the text, searching key phrases or sentences for each plan item. The second group of exercises has been aimed at developing reproductive and productive abilities to reproduce and interpret the content of job-related texts and articles in the context of the problems the author is concerned with; to argue, based on the material of the text, to express their thoughts and judgments on these problems; to evaluate the information contained in the job-related texts and articles in terms of its significance for the student; to report what the future manager got to know and so on.

The integral part of the learning process at each stage and at the end of the training has been presented as the assessment of the formation of the level of certain skills of students. The developed model provides for the ongoing assessment at each lesson, as well as summative assessment as part of the module test, which is carried out after the study of the module. Unlike non-computer training, the web-site provides complete confidentiality of the results of tasks execution. In addition, an important point is the possibility of self-regulation of speed and other ergonomic capabilities of the “Hot English”.

Traditionally, reading comprehension was narrowly thought to encompass answering some multiple-choice questions after reading a story or a reading passage. While this may be one form of reading comprehension, it is not comprehensive and does not take into account the stages of reading comprehension, requirements for understanding different genres of text. The students’ attitude towards teaching English reading comprehension with metacognitive strategies was at a good level. There were a number of reasons for this. First, a specific set of metacognitive strategies was employed [4; 6, p. 270–279]. This strategy can help the process of language learning by fostering enjoyment and effectiveness. Learners can successfully arrange their self-learning activities. This idea was combined with the three teaching cycles of action [5, p. 449–522]. It reflects a continual process of teaching reading that leads to interaction in the classroom and on the MOODLE platform too.

Activating previous knowledge is an essential ingredient in building reading comprehension skills. It allows the new professionally oriented information “to stick” to the older information and be more easily recognized, understood, and remembered. Initially, this may be a separate step for readers; however, with practice this skill may be incorporated into the previewing process. We have asked our students what they know about the themes, topics, and setting of the text that they had previewed. If student have written down a list of key terms, we referred to them again. We have used an open-ended (“Tell me what you know about these topics?”) or more directive format (“Have you ever travelled out West? What do you think they are referring to when they mention…”) to find out what our students know about these themes/terms. And only after this stage we introduced future managers schemas by comparing them to our reading glasses.

We have chosen our own format: multiple types of media are now available to students (e.g., electronic books, audio books, and text-to-speech) on the MOODLE. It is important for future managers to read along with audio supports to increase professionally oriented vocabulary and reading fluency. Some students selected to watch a movie in conjunction with reading the professionally oriented texts. The visual and auditory input gave us possibility to strengthen students’ comprehension. Our students selected this avenue for increasing reading comprehension, “Hot
“English” helped them to compare and contrast the texts and the movie (see the pictures 1, 2: Screenshots from “Hot English”).

Picture 1. Screenshot from “Hot English”

Picture 2. Screenshot from “Hot English”

In this video quiz (Picture 1, 2) students fill in the missing past simple irregular verbs. There are 20 gaps fill questions to practice grammar. These are quick questions where students need to fill in only one word. Scene summary: an odd candidate shows up for a job interview only to find that the interviewers are even weirder than he is. A story with a surprise ending. Video URL: https://youtu.be/Idn-whtzvcM. Lesson type: Grammar practice. Dialect: British English (UK English). Tags: job interview, animated short, irregular verbs, past simple, grammar practice.

Our multimedia can be presented in different styles with optional possibilities. It is extremely important that the instructor provides a wide range of ways to demonstrate competence. Many students cannot show what they really know in the traditional test writing format. But there should be a variety of opportunities that the future manager not only demonstrated the competence in reading, but also made his / her unique point of view. Below there are several examples of final projects to demonstrate reading comprehension: 1) create a shadow box or collage illustrating the main themes; 2) produce a film of this text re-set in a different time period; 3) re-enact the text in a skit; 4) write and illustrate an original text jacket for the text; 5) rewrite the ending of the story (include dialogue and imagery); 6) give an oral presentation about the author of this text;
7) stage an interview with one of the characters; 8) make a poster with a story map/character analysis; 9) create a trivia game with quotes from the book (“Who would have said this?”).

In addition, our student’s learning style should help to determine the way reading comprehension is taught and how they demonstrate their knowledge. And we have to inevitably learn alongside our students if we decide to venture beyond traditional comprehension questions. In accordance to the results of our experiment, we would like to say that forming English reading comprehension is a multi-step process and demands that the student bring every ounce of her/his experience and world knowledge to the task.

Modern scientific literature analysis on the topic enabled the experimental idea that teaching future managers English professionally oriented reading should be based on the following positions: developing grammatical and especially lexical skills which are essential for reading comprehension; professionally oriented texts analysis with the aim of further focusing on their main features and predicting possible difficulties which students can face; activating students’ prior knowledge; careful text selection with the focus on students’ linguistic and subject knowledge; focus on visual information and means of its visualization; practicing intensive and extensive reading of professionally oriented texts; teaching strategies through direct instruction, encouraging learners to select appropriate strategies according to the type of the text and reading goals, individualize their strategy repertoires; problem-based learning with the aim of developing creativity, reflection, personal qualities; individual approach to learners.

Modern scientific literature analysis showed that reading consists of lower-level processes (automatic word recognition, rapid and automatic syntactic processing, combining word and structural meanings into units) as well as higher-level processes (coordination of main and supporting ideas of the text, interpretation of the information from the text). Skills which are typical of lower-level processes can be relatively automatic while skills of upper-level processes are not automatic. Reading comprehension processes of fluent readers work simultaneously, and the purpose defines reading processes emphasized. Working memory plays an exceptional role on both levels as its major component – executive control – is recognized as central to comprehension processing.

Professionally oriented reading competence is the ability to read authentic academic texts of different types demonstrating different levels of understanding depending on the objectives.

Professionally oriented reading competence consists of explicit and implicit knowledge, reading skills (lexical and grammatical) which refer to the lower-level processes, reading comprehension skills relating to higher-level processes and study skills. All the components of academic reading competence have been specified in the web-case “Hot English”.

It has been proved that professionally oriented reading competence development is influenced by the following factors: learning goals, motivation, practice, subject knowledge, strategy use, social interaction, self-reflection, autonomy support, correctly organized instruction. We consider the latter the dominant one which influences all the other factors.

The analysis of modern literature, the reading test formats of internationally recognized exams which contain professionally oriented texts or at least passages in formal written English as well as purposes of reading in academic settings (to search for information, learn from text, integrate information from different sources, analyse and criticize text, write, search for information needed for writing) enabled the development of the following assessment criteria for English professionally oriented reading comprehension: comprehension of the gist, comprehension of a detail, locating and understanding specific information, ability to analyse the information, capacity to integrate information.

The limitation of this study is its small sample virtual size. In order to develop English reading comprehension abilities, metacognitive strategies are valuable. Centering, arranging, planning and evaluating one’s learning are particularly effective in enhancing English reading comprehension. These research findings provide practical information about developing English reading comprehension abilities using metacognitive strategies. They improve future managers’ reading skills by enabling more enjoyable and easier professionally oriented foreign language learning. In applying metacognitive strategies in teaching, a teacher should fully understand the theory. Students should receive orientation to the processes and activities before starting the MOODLE program. Learner participation should be a focus. Duration of each activity should be carefully considered and remain flexible. The selection of the reading texts should be varied and appropriate for the level of the students. This technique is a key tool for students to develop efficient reading skill. This should be extended to other contexts. It should be
compared with other reading strategies to seek a set of best practices for effectively improving students’ English language comprehension.

By working with “Hot English” in the process of forming to future managers English-language professionally-oriented competence in reading, the principle of individualization of learning has been realized as much as possible, because the students can choose and adapt educational materials in accordance with their professional needs and interests, level of English professionally-oriented language and development of certain skills. Consequently, the model, developed by us, has been based on the cycle, systematic and step by step training principles and has been implemented in the context of the credit-module training system and the modular rating system of evaluation.

The perspectives of further research are developing methodological recommendations on how to work with author’s course “Hot English” to form future managers English reading competence.

LITERATURE


REFERENCES

THE AUTHOR’S COURSE «DEUTSCH NACH ENGLISCH 4» FOR FUTURE MANAGERS IN TOURISM

This paper presents some problematic aspects in scientific methods of experimental research study. As a result of a comprehensive analysis of the development of such experimental education at present it is possible to determine the priority directions of its further modernization, which provide for the needs of the labour market, the formation of an optimal network of tourism management schools, a system of quality assurance of vocational education, diversification of funding by delegating more powers to regional education authorities. The experimental research study results with the author’s course "German after English 4" for future managers in tourism, that are described in the article, are to enhance the role and responsibility of social partners, businesses, trends and quality requirements of the skilled workers. The education market and the labour market should be developed through the implementation of a common methodology for their monitoring on the state basis in order to train future skilled tourist managers in higher educational establishments and creating together with employers on the state basis the vocational schools, that are specialized in training centres for skilled workers using the dual training system.

Keywords: author’s course, German after English, experimental research study, future managers in tourism, high educational establishments.

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АВТОРСЬКИЙ КУРС «DEUTSCH NACH ENGLISCH 4» ДЛЯ МАЙБУТНІХ МЕНЕДЖЕРІВ ТУРИЗМУ

Описано результати експериментальної перевірки алгоритму формування німецькомовної професійно орієнтованої компетентності майбутніх працівників сфери міжнародного туризму як специфічної реалізації навчального процесу з виробничими цілями в межах розпізнавання іншомовної комунікативної діяльності; виявлення взаємозв'язків психологічних механізмів у багатоступінчастих процесах оволодіння мовною діяльністю в умовах інтерференційних явищ та позитивного перенесення. Проаналізовано психологічні дослідження та методологічні проблеми інтерференції та позитивного перенесення при вивченні другої іноземної мови після першої зарубіжної та вітчизняних науковців з метою систематизації існуючих алгоритмів, вилення наукових концепцій та стратегій вивчення другої іноземної мови з точки зору межуєвої підтримки. Виявлено, що отримані результати після здійснення експериментального дослідження остаточно підтвердили імовірність гіпотези про те, що розгляд психологічних характеристик, механізмів інтерференційних явищ та позитивного перенесення у процесі формування німецькомовної професійно орієнтованої компетентності майбутніх працівників сфери міжнародного туризму (німецька мова після англійської) ефективно відображаються на якості професійно орієнтованої освіти. Рекомендовано при вивченні другої іноземної мови після першої враховувати наступні чинники: зв’язок професійно орієнтованого навчання другої іноземної мови.