

# Building up a reading competency in modern school

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**Abstract**—The article deals with the relevance of the formation of modern students' reading competence. School education needs to develop a systematic approach to the formation of reader competence based on interdisciplinary connections. The ability to work competently with texts of different genres and styles is a prerequisite for the success of students not only in the lessons of Russian language and literature. In the article, the authors give an example of a comprehensive work that could be included in the bank of didactic materials for the diagnosis of meaningful reading skills.

**Keywords**—reader's competence, interdisciplinary skills, system approach, text as a didactic unit

## I. INTRODUCTION

Modern society needs a person who freely writes, speaks, adequately understands both the meaning of heard or read ("someone else's" text), and the main content of the text, as well as ways of communicating to the addressee. The presence of these skills makes it possible to achieve mutual understanding in the process of communication. Information, which is framed in the form of various texts, accompanies a person everywhere: he reads, hears, and creates. The genre space of such texts is diverse: information from various sites, congratulations on the anniversary, a report at the meeting, a job application, and advertising on the radio, a message that is sent on the mobile network, publication in the newspaper, and much more. Skills, called in the methodical science of text, become practically significant for our contemporary. They are in demand in speech practice, and for someone are the bases of professional growth.

The basis of school education should be the training of text activity. Text activity, as it is known, is understood as a type of personal activity, which includes nonverbal and verbal intellectual and mental operations performed for the organization of meanings in the course of communication [1]. In school teaching practice, it is important that the text activity includes a system of actions based on the knowledge; skills and abilities that allow you creating perceive and interpret texts. Being a kind of communicative activity, it is considered to be especially difficult due to the fact that it reflects not only the knowledge of the units of the language system, as well as the rules of their change and combination, but also the possession of the mechanisms of generation and perception of speech messages, in the process of which the goals and objectives of communication, the factor of the sphere of communication, the addressee, conditions, etc. are taken into account.

The objective of this study is generalization of experience of formation of the text of the abilities of pupils and

development of teaching materials on identification of the reader's competence.

The object of the research in this article is the modern system of school education, and the subject of the research is the process of formation of reader's competence.

The authors solved the following tasks: first, the main contradictions between the requirements of the Federal state educational standard on the level of reader literacy and the existing situation in school education; second, the results of methodological experience on the formation of skills of working with the text; third, a model of integrated work, which involves both the formation and identification of reader competence.

## II. METHODS

The conceptual basis of this study are designed to present the theory and methods of teaching the text activities which are, in varying degrees, explain the factors that influence the formation of reading competence, as well as the experience of international and indigenous technology to identify the reader's competence, such as PIRLS, PISA, and "Pull and Push" [2].

### A. Basic theory of the text skills formation

In the methodology of Russian language teaching in recent years, the efforts of scientists and methodologists developed ways of learning the language through speech and speech based on the text, because it is in the text is the implementation of potential language units. The key point of this approach – the study of linguistic phenomena on the basis of text – was formulated in the monograph of N.A. Ippolitova: "as a didactic unit, the text will allow to merge two important directions in the study of the Russian language at school: the knowledge of the language system and the knowledge of the norms and rules of communication, speech behavior in different situations [3]. The main purpose of this approach is to promote the development and formation of language flair, speech skills, as well as improving spelling and punctuation literacy of students.

In the 90-ies in the works of T. M. Pakhnova, A. D. Deikina, etc. was the beginning of a very productive direction associated with the examination tests in the Russian language on the basis of the text. Long before the emergence of the competence approach, work began on the formation of one of the key competences in the modern Federal state standard – the reader's one.

In the framework of these arguments, we will focus on this aspect of learning text activity – the formation of reader competence. Due to the fact that in the modern normative

documents, there is no unity in the definition of the differences between the concepts of competence and expertise, we will proceed from the definitions which are presented in most of the studies on the competence-based approach (I. A. Winter, V. V. Krayevsky, A. E. Lebedev, A. V. Khutorskoy and others). Competence (from lat. "competeo" – achieve, correspond, fit) is the knowledge, experience and ability on the scope of issues in which someone knowledgeable. Competence is the ability to solve life and professional problems in a particular area. Thus, competence is a set of so familiar knowledge and skills, and competence is the quality of possession of them, this is how competence is manifested in the activity. Competencies can be the key, i.e. reference sets of knowledge, skills, and qualities.

### *B. Challenges of the time and modern school*

Thus, the reader's competence includes a set of knowledge and skills, thanks to which the student is able to plan and carry out work on the development of texts.

Over the years, this knowledge and skills have traditionally been correlated with literature as a subject of study and considered in the context of literary texts. And this state of Affairs was justified, since it is at the lessons of literature that the student refers to the work of art as a text, determines its main idea, monitors the movement of the plot, catches the subtext, the symbolism of images, etc., that is, learns to be a qualified reader. And even in recent times this was enough: the country was reading, the book was a valuable gift, there was no endless and rapid flow of information.

The new time forces a new assessment of the role of reading skills. Now it is obvious that in modern society the reader's competence is one of the components of General cultural competence, that is, the ability to freely navigate in the modern socio-cultural space.

It is no coincidence that the basis of the modern Federal educational standard is the provision that education should be aimed at the formation of graduates' key competencies that are adequate to socio-economic conditions [4]. One of them is reader's competence.

Modern forms of state certification determine the relevance of the formation of the reader's competence in all school subjects. The text in all school subjects should become a full object of study as the most informative unit of language in speech. And, indeed, in the control and measuring materials of each subject there are tasks associated with the perception of the text, with its understanding, with the work on the text. So, in the exam in biology according to the task number 24 to find errors in the text, specify the number of sentences in which mistakes are made, correct them. In the task number 4 on geography you want to read the text below, which skipped a number of words (phrases), select from the list of words (phrases) that you want to insert in place of gaps.

Tasks in control and measuring materials test not only the ability to find and extract information from the text, but also to interpret and process it, create secondary statements based on it, make a plan of the text, give the author's position and find in the text and extract the necessary arguments from it.

While in modern school there is a contradiction between the high requirements for the results of educational activities in the aspect of the formation of reader competence and misunderstanding on the part of subject teachers of their mission in this process. The school lacks a systematic approach to the formation of met subject skills and abilities to work with texts.

### III. RESULTS

Following is the example of integrated work, which could enter the Bank of teaching materials for conducting the diagnostic skills of intelligent reading.

Our sample work can be used not only in the diagnosis, but also in teaching the ability to read and understand various texts, including training; work with information presented in various forms; use the information to solve various educational and educational and practical problems. All these skills form the basis of met subject skills and should ensure the formation of the ability to work both in the educational process and in solving problems in real life situations.

In the Bank of didactic materials created by us there are works for different age groups. In this article we will give as an example the work addressed to students of the 9th classes.

Students will get acquainted with the content of the three texts. Tasks 1 to 13 involve working with text № 1, tasks 14 to 17 relate to texts № 2 and № 3; when performing tasks № 17 and № 18 can be based on the content of all texts. To perform the work is given 00 minutes.

When answering some tasks it was necessary to choose one or several answers from the offered options, in others it was required to give a free self-constructed short or detailed answer.

The work is expected to develop three groups of skills:

- 1) General understanding and orientation in the content of the text
- 2) Understanding the content and form of the text, interpretation of information
- 3) the Use of information from the text for various purposes. Making value judgments and creating your own texts.

Basic skills, which are aimed at the formation of the task of the first group:

- define the main idea of the text,
- to search and identify in the text of the information presented in different forms (orientation in the text),
- correlate information from different parts of the text, compare the main text and non-text components,
- organize, rank and group information,
- to formulate direct conclusions and conclusions on the basis of the facts available in the text.

The main skills, which are aimed at the formation of the task of the second group:

- analyze, interpret and summarize the information presented in the text,

- to formulate, on the basis of its direct conclusions and value judgments, to find arguments supporting the conclusion.

Basic skills, which are aimed at the formation of the task of the third group:

- to Express evaluative judgments and your point of view about the read text,

- use information from the text to solve a variety of tasks without involving or involving additional knowledge,

- make on the basis of the text of a monologue on the question.

The following types of tasks are used:

1) tasks with the choice of one or more correct answers;

2) tasks with a free short answer (you want to write a short answer in the form of a number or word (s) in the space provided or emphasize /circle part of the text);

3) the job with free detailed answers (you want to record a complete answer, decision or explanation to the answer, make a drawing).

Read the text # 1 and complete the tasks.

Text # 1

(1) Zoos are the most visited cultural sites in the world and often outnumber museums, theaters and circuses combined by annual number of visitors. According to media reports, more than 175 million visitors a year visit zoos around the world. Families with children especially like to come here. And Russian zoos are no exception. The Moscow zoo alone sells approximately 1.5 million entrance tickets throughout the year. In Russia there are more than one hundred only state zoos, among them about fifty large.

(2) Zoos have existed for a long time. The first mention of the menageries with wild animals belongs to the Egyptian pharaohs: in 2009, during excavations in Egypt, archaeologists have found evidence of the existence of the menagerie 3.5 thousand years BC. Until the early nineteenth century menageries were mostly a symbol of the power and greatness of the monarchy, such as menageries of Chinese emperors, Ivan the terrible or the famous menagerie of Louis XIV at Versailles. At the turn of the XVIII–XIX centuries in Europe and Russia there were mobile menageries of private entrepreneurs, who showed for commercial purposes mainly "strange animals".

(3) But the real concept of zoos was formed only at the beginning of the XIX century, when they began to appear in some European cities. It is believed that the first "modern" zoos got Paris, Vienna, Dublin and London. London Zoological society, founded in 1826, formulated the purpose of such institutions, which was "the development of Zoology and zoo psychology, as well as the discovery of new and interesting objects in the animal Kingdom." In 1864 the first Zoological garden in Russia was opened on Presnensky ponds in Moscow.

(4) Since then, the increase in the number of zoos has been on a leaps and bounds and peaked in the 1950s-1960s, when municipalities in pursuit of status and businessmen in search of profit began to invest in zoos. In these years, zoos

were often no more than entertainment centers, where animals were displayed to the curious public. Even old zoos associated with scientific work, almost did not attach importance to more serious issues. For example, research consisted mostly of attempts to a view and content wild animals in captivity. Almost all zoos were engaged in solving their immediate range of tasks, without thinking about the responsibility to wildlife. This situation has led to the fact that more and more people began to think about the inadmissibility of zoos.

(5) Opponents of zoos declare that zoos are nowadays a cruel anachronism and a "prison for our younger brothers", where they are not only deprived of their liberty, but also often subjected to cruel treatment, poorly maintained, underfed. And the defenders of zoos insist that modern "civilized" zoos perform not only the most important for society entertainment, educational and scientific functions, but also save many rare species of animals from extinction.

(6) Over the past 30-40 years, major changes have taken place in the world zoo sphere, including in Russia. Instead of close and dirty cells appeared spacious, simulating the natural environment enclosures, fenced off by ditches with water or transparent screens, sharply increased the level of veterinary care, and changed the attitude to animals.

(7) However, the ideal life of zoos in the world cannot be called. Behind the seemingly prosperous facade there are many problems, one of which is the wrong behavior of zoo visitors.

(8) The Association of zoos and aquariums of Russia was Recently established in our country. Its primary task was to work on the draft law "On Zoological parks in the Russian Federation". Experts and the public expect that such a law should stop the activities of unscrupulous private zoos, including contact ones. A new Union should change the situation with domestic zoos and affect the continuing ambiguous attitude in society in this area.

(9) Participants in the discussion about whether zoos are needed or not, apparently, will not find a common language for a long time. But it is obvious that in the XXI century zoos should move to a qualitatively new level, in which they will retain all their important social, educational and scientific functions, but will really become beautiful museums of wildlife. In fact, zoos are part of a larger problem – people's attitude to nature, to their environment [5].

1. What is basically said in the text? Select only one answer and circle the letter next to the selected answer.

1. About the history of zoos in Russia.
2. About attitude to zoos in society.
3. About research in zoos.
4. The popularity of zoos in the modern world.

2. Number the following statements according to the order in which they appear in the text

- The London Zoological society has formulated the purpose of zoos.

In zoos a lot of problems, one of which is the incorrect behavior of visitors to zoos.

- Zoos are very popular all over the world.
- Zoo in the world sphere, major changes occurred.
- Zoos should move to a new level, where they will retain all their important functions.
- Zoos were a symbol of the power and greatness of monarchical power.

3. For what purpose was the Association of zoos and aquariums of Russia established?

4. How do you understand the meaning of the word "anachronism" in paragraph 5?

5. Circle the number of the correct statement that corresponds to the content of the text.

1) In the XIX century in Russia there were mobile menageries, whose employees were actively engaged in scientific research.

2) Life in zoos for wild animals is ideal.

3) the First mention of the menageries belong to the times of Ancient Greece.

4) the Concept of zoos was formed in the early XIX century.

6. In which countries zoos appeared before the twentieth century? Circle the numbers of the correct answers.

- (1) France
- (2) Germany
- (3) the United States
- (4) Ireland
- (5) Switzerland
- (6) UK

7. Continue with the phrase "Zoos are the most visited cultural sites in the world because...»

8. How do you understand the meaning of the phrase "find a common language" in the ninth paragraph?

9. Determine the style of the text and choose the correct answer.

- 1) popular Science
- 2) Journalistic
- 3) Official business
- 4) Conversational
- 5) Artistic

10. In what paragraph of the text № 1 contains information to help answer the question: "What is the author's attitude to the problem of zoos?" Choose the correct answer.

- 1) in 1 paragraph
- 2) in paragraph 6
- 3) in paragraph 8
- 4) in paragraph 9

11. Come up with the name of the text № 1.

12. Write down from text # 1 basic argument FOR and AGAINST zoos.

13. Analyze the data of the world society for the protection of animals, given in table 1.

TABLE I. RESULTS OF A PUBLIC OPINION POLL ON ZOOS (ACCORDING TO CROSSBOW RESEARCH AGENCY, (UK, 1994), NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS – 1009 PEOPLE)

Opinion	Result (%)
Suppose that the main target of the zoo is entertainment	82%
Suppose that now more amount of people is worried about the conditions of animals that 10 years ago	80%
Concerned about the conditions of animals in ZOOS	80%
believe that animals in zoos suffer both physically and mentally	6%
Will not go to the zoo, if they are sure that thus will not help the protection of animals	51%

How are the results of the survey presented in the table related to the arguments FOR and AGAINST zoos? Choose the correct answer.

- (1) They are more supportive of the pros.
- (2) They support both pros And Cons.
- (3) They are more supportive of the "Against" arguments.
- (4) They support neither the pros nor the cons.

14. Read two opinions of Internet users about the problem of city zoos.

Text № 2. I believe that zoos in cities solve important problems related to the conservation of endangered species. In addition, zoos help scientists to conduct research in the field of Zoology. It is a kind of unique laboratory, scientific and educational institution.

Of course, in zoos animals not be easy. They are deprived of freedom and choice. But people take care of them, and animals do not need anything. They have a balanced diet, heat, shelter and veterinary care, so they live much better than their free brethren. I think in the natural habitat the life of wild animals is shorter.

People need to communicate with wild animals. Therefore, we are happy to visit zoos (Andrew)

Text № 3. I always felt sorry for the animals in the zoo. Since childhood, I remember the cells with the sad eyes of animals. They are much better off living in their natural habitat. It is profitable for zoo owners to sell expensive tickets and earn good money on it, but they do not seriously think about the life of animals.

It is clear that a lot of scientific work is carried out in zoos, but it is mainly related to the breeding and maintenance of wild animals in captivity. But, if people will not keep wild animals in zoos, such research not will need (Olga).

How do the opinions of Andrei and Olga relate to each other? Choose the correct answer:

- 1) They Express opposing views on the same topic.
  - 2) they use different arguments to reach a common conclusion.
  - 3) They are written in the same style, but devoted to different topics.
  - 4) They Express the same General point of view, but come to different conclusions.
15. Based on the analysis of the opinions presented, choose a statement that both Andrew and Olga would agree with?

- 1) Zoos help to preserve endangered species.
- 2) Zoos are the base for scientific research.
- 3) Zoos contribute to the desire of people to communicate with wild animals.
- 4) Zoos are a way to make a profit.

16. Imagine that you are participating in a discussion on the issue at hand. Think, whose position – Andrey or Olga - is closer to you. Ask your opponent a question using the information from the texts you read.

17. The author of the text № 1 M. Bolshakov notes that "zoos are part of a larger problem – the relationship of people to nature" (paragraph 9).

Write a reasoned answer to the question: "Why is it important to protect nature?" (5 to 7 sentences).

#### IV. DISCUSSION

This paper deals with the relevance of the formation of modern students' reading competence. Observations on how students read and understand the texts, are able to work with this or that information indicate that school education is in dire need of a systematic approach to the formation of reader competence based on interdisciplinary connections. The ability to work competently with texts of different genres and styles is a prerequisite for the success of students not only in the lessons of Russian language and literature. While in modern school there is a contradiction between the high requirements for the results of educational activities in the aspect of the formation of reader competence and misunderstanding on the part of subject teachers of their mission in this process. The school lacks a systematic approach to teaching reading.

The article provides an example of a comprehensive work that could be included in the Bank of didactic materials and be used not only for the diagnosis of meaningful reading skills, but also for the formation of reader competence. This material is of practical importance for teachers-practitioners.

The development of this study involves many areas. Firstly, the development of various models of didactic materials in the aspect of the formation of skills of working with the text can be continued. Secondly, it is promising to develop a model of the program of professional development of subject teachers, with the aim of their readiness to organize work with the text in the classroom.

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