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**DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS' READING SKILLS THROUGH VARIOUS TEST TASKS*****Normuminova Dilobar****Alisher Navoiy nomidagi Toshkent davlat o'zbek tili va adabiyoti universiteti Ona tili ta'limi kafedrasida stajyor-o'qituvchisi, Uzbekistan*

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**ABOUT ARTICLE****Key words:** Reading, understanding, task, text, cognitive ability, decoding.**Received:** 03.03.2024**Accepted:** 08.03.2024**Published:** 13.03.2024**Abstract:** Reading comprehension is one of the basic skills that can be developed through exercises and assignments. This small study was conducted to prove that choosing the right text and working on it through different types of tests can improve reading skills for students. 50 high school students were selected and various test tasks were developed. The collected data were analyzed and the students who worked on the text through several interesting tasks had significantly better reading comprehension skills than the other group. It was found to have increased. The results and conclusions of the research are covered in the article.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Reading literacy is critical to success not only in the education system, but in other areas as well. One of the main issues of research is to pay attention to the ability of students to read books, including their ability to select information, to understand, and to develop their interpretation skills. Reading literacy means the ability of a person to understand, use, reflect on and react to texts in order to achieve the goal of developing his knowledge and potential, finding his place in society. Understanding of reading literacy should be reflected in questions and tasks designed to assess students' knowledge of reading literacy.

Working on the text, understanding and explaining it is a complex process. Reading is one of the main activities of learning. Reading comprehension has three elements: the reader, the text, and the activity or purpose for reading. Cognitive ability measures and processes should be considered by checking the

reader's understanding of the text. Comprehension and reading is very important. Cognitively based views of reading comprehension emphasize interactivity. Text comprehension varies. These include lower level lexical skills such as word reading. Reading comprehension is achieved through the ability to process text, understand its meaning, and integrate it with what the student already knows.

Pourhosein Gilakjani Ahmadi states that the main purpose of reading is to get the correct message from the text. Correctly solving the structure of reading (i.e. the relationship of words, understanding which words express the main concept in the sentence, which ones represent the concepts subordinate to it), as well as the interconnection of the content blocks of the text are processes that take place before understanding the text, forming its content projection in the mind, and everyone who reads the text it cannot be assumed that one reader will fully understand the text after passing these levels. Since each reader's receptive ability is different, those who read the text in the same way will be at different levels of understanding. If the teacher knows these levels well, with the help of questions, he will be able to determine at which level the student is, and give directions for better understanding of the text.

As noted by Iroda Azimova, any lesson is a psycholinguistic process, because the child decodes the information given through the medium of language or encodes it to express his knowledge. Any cognitive skill of a person is formed on the basis of experience.

Reading comprehension is a complex task that depends on a number of cognitive and linguistic processes. Two skills demystify this complexity: Decoding and constitutes linguistic understanding. The main purpose of reading is to understand. The process from identifying individual words to drawing conclusions about situations that are not fully described in the text is a whole set of cognitive and linguistic operations. This complexity means that finding simple answers to questions like "how does reading comprehension develop" and "why does it sometimes fail" quickly become an impossible task. Reading comprehension requires both decoding and linguistic comprehension. If the reader cannot understand the words in the text, he will not have the ability to understand the written language, no matter how complex the spoken language. As children grow older and their decoding skills increase, the relationship between linguistic comprehension and reading comprehension increases. This suggests that after decoding, reading comprehension is limited by how well a person understands spoken language.[ Pearson,P.D.,& Johnson, D. D. (1978). Teaching reading comprehension. New York]

Reading literacy is a person's ability to understand and use written texts, to think about them and to engage in reading in order to achieve their goals, expand their knowledge and opportunities, and participate in social life.

Reading, of course, requires student material. In reading comprehension, those materials should contain enough information for a qualified reader to read fragments of texts or a collection of texts based on a specific task and solve the problem given in the task. Although there are many types of texts, and although any assessment covers a wide range of texts, there is no clear cut category for the many different types of texts that students encounter. The emergence of electronic media and genre-rich texts and text-based communication services will further complicate such texts, although some may disappear in the next decade and some may be revisited in the meantime.

Students need to have the specific reading skills needed to work with texts.

- Full text-based skills for obtaining information from the text and forming the simplest thoughts based on it;
- Ability to find information and form direct conclusions;
- Finding specific information from the text;
- Making simple conclusions based on the text; produce skills based on their own thoughts about what they read;
- Combining, interpreting and evaluating text information with the student's own knowledge;
- Establishing links not expressed by the author;
- Interpret them directly in relation to the general idea of the text.

Teaching reading and writing in schools today is not limited to academic goals, it must include functional and operational goals related to everyday life and work.

Several criteria are followed when choosing a text to develop reading literacy:

- The selected text should be understandable;
- The text is displayed in different forms (diagram, picture, map, table, drawing);
- The text can be presented from fragments of artistic works, biographies, personal letters, documents, articles in newspapers and magazines, advertisements, geographical maps;

- In the systematic study of the language, the rich possibilities of the language, including the rich cultural heritage: effective use of ready-made texts such as poems, songs, stories, short stories, novels, narratives, epics;
- The text should be in the form of a fragment of an artistic work, educational, official working papers: receipt, description;
- To be a text that directs students to think, search and reason, find a solution to the problem and draw a conclusion;
- Diversity of text topics.

Jacquelynn S. Popp recommends the following for text selection:

1. Using different types of text.
2. The richness of ideas and information, depth, high-quality text selection.
3. Choose a text that is difficult to recognize and understand.
4. When choosing a text, it is necessary to take into account its linguistic requirements (words, decoding, sentence complexity...)

Text is very important in shaping reading comprehension processes and building reading comprehension skills. In the research conducted by Jim Hoffman and his colleagues, it is clear that when choosing a text, the teacher must first be able to set the right goal. Choosing a text that is slightly more difficult for students based on their interests will increase performance.

With this in mind, this study aims to answer the question of whether different test items help to develop reading comprehension skills.

The experimental test was conducted in school 216 of Yashnabad district of Tashkent city. The experiment began on February 4 and lasted until March 14. 9-A class students took part in the experimental test. 15 students were selected for the experiment. In the first lesson of the experimental test, the initial control work was taken from the group. During the experimental lessons, the students were given various tasks with the purpose of determining and improving their reading comprehension level along with texts of different topics and forms. Such experimental classes were held once a week.

Each of the texts consists of 4-5 tasks, and students first read the texts 2-3 times, and then complete the tasks. The control texts (in the first and last lessons) from the students consist of only one task (questions). The following types of assignments were used in the experimental lessons conducted with students: answering questions; test; find and write the necessary words instead of dots; put a title on selected parts of the text; to put a mark in the marked box, determining whether the information given in the table is correct, incorrect or not given at all... During the experimental test, we used texts on various topics. In total, 12 sessions were held during the test period, and students were assigned 3-4 tasks in each session. All participants selected for this study have the same skill level, which makes the test results more reliable. It is impossible to work with students of different levels, because different levels of skills require different tests and assignments to achieve reliable results.

Let's get acquainted with the analysis of the answers written by students during the training. In the first lesson of the experiment, tasks were given based on the text "Ecotourism". In the first and last control, the tasks are given the same, and the number of questions is 10.

Table 1. Initial and final follow-up performance of the experimental group.

<b>Student serial number</b>	<b>Correct answers</b>	<b>Incorrect answers</b>	<b>Correct answers</b>	<b>Incorrect Answers</b>
1	5	5	9	1
2	4	6	8	2
3	3	7	10	-
4	6	4	9	1
5	7	3	8	2
6	8	2	9	1
7	3	7	10	-
8	4	6	7	3
9	5	5	6	4

10	4	6	8	2
11	4	6	9	1
12	5	5	9	1
13	6	4	10	-
14	7	3	9	1
15	5	5	10	-
<b>Total :</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>19</b>

When we analyze the results of the first and last control:

$$\begin{aligned}
 &|V_1 - V_2| / [(V_1 + V_2) / 2] \times 100 = |98 - 109| / [(98 + 109) / 2] \times 100 = \\
 &= |98 - 109| / [(98 + 109) / 2] \times 100 = |98 - 109| / [(98 + 109) / 2] \times 100 \\
 &= |-11| / [2072] \times 100 = |-11| / [2072] \times 100 \\
 &= 11103.5 \times 100 = 11103.5 \times 100 \\
 &= 0.10628 \times 100 = 0.10628 \times 100 \\
 &= 9.628\% \text{ difference} = 9.628\% \text{ difference}
 \end{aligned}$$

There was an increase of 10.628% between the first control and the last control.

$$\begin{aligned}
 &|V_1 - V_2| / [(V_1 + V_2) / 2] \times 100 = |102 - 136| / [(102 + 136) / 2] \times 100 = \\
 &= |102 - 136| / [(102 + 136) / 2] \times 100 = |102 - 136| / [(102 + 136) / 2] \times 100 \\
 &= |-34| / [2382] \times 100 = |-34| / [2382] \times 100 \\
 &= 34119 \times 100 = 34119 \times 100 \\
 &= 0.285714 \times 100 = 0.285714 \times 100
 \end{aligned}$$

=28.5714%difference

In the experimental group, there was an increase of 28.57% between the first control and the last control. To calculate this difference, we used the percentage difference calculator at calculator.php.

The result shows that the reading comprehension scores of the experimental group increased by almost 30%. The table below shows the results of 10 experimental lessons.

Table 2. The results of correct answers from practice lesson 2 to practice lesson 11:

Number	2-exp	3-exp	4-exp	5-exp	6-exp	7-exp	8-exp	9-exp	10-exp
1	11	10	9	9	9	11	12	10	15
2	10	4	8	7	9	10	11	14	13
3	9	5	9	7	8	11	12	11	14
4	8	7	6	8	10	10	11	12	11
5	7	8	6	5	8	7	10	9	12
6	5	9	5	6	9	8	10	10	12
7	6	5	8	8	8	9	10	8	11
8	7	6	9	7	12	7	9	9	10
9	8	6	7	8	15	8	8	13	9
10	9	6	10	5	11	9	12	12	14
11	5	7	5	9	10	7	11	10	12
12	6	8	6	5	9	8	10	8	12
13	4	9	7	7	9	9	12	11	11
14	5	8	7	5	15	11	11	12	13
15	7	7	8	6	9	10	10	10	15
<b>Total:</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>174</b>

The experience shows that the hypothesis put forward in the theoretical part of the work was confirmed in practice. The last table made it possible to compare the scores of students. It appears that the scores obtained in our first experiment differ from those obtained in the last experiment.

The first session consists of 5 tasks, the first task is in the form of a test, 3 questions are given. Pupils No. 1, 3, 5, 11 made the same mistake in this task. Pupil No. 7 could not answer 2 questions, the question asked for the exact sentence given in the text.

3. Why did the monk ask Bistomi to stay for forty days?

- a) because he wants to convert to his religion
- b) wanted to earn money
- c) he wanted to be in the conversation of a saint
- d) Answers a and c are correct

Many students have marked the wrong answer to this question. They specified option d). A little thought is required here. Both options are marked as correct, first there is an intention to convert him, and then he asks him to stay in the saint's conversation. The number of correct answers in task 1 is 60% for 4 students, 50% for 2, 65% for 4, 78% for 2, 1 for 75%, 1 for 70%. The assignment was in the form of a test. 5.15 students gave the wrong answer to question 2. "Why did Bistomi go on a long journey?" to the question, they chose the answer "to study science". The correct answer was "due to self-discipline."

In task 2, students had to write answers to open questions. 4 students got exactly one question wrong. "Who is Bayazid?" was asked in the question, the answer to which was given in the text as "saint". But students with numbers 3, 4, 6, 9 wrote different answers. One of them wrote "monk", "sheikh", "emir", "tourist". Our student number 12 wrote wrong answers to 2 questions. One of them confused numbers close to each other because it was a numerical question. This task is a memory exercise and tests how well the students remember the information. The results of the task are slightly higher than the previous one, i.e. 8 pupils understood 55%, 2 pupils 65%, 3 pupils 67%.

In task 3, they were asked to mark the statements as "true" or "false". 3 students got 55%, 2 got 68%, 4 got 65%, 2 got 70%, and 3 got 75%. Many students asked question 2 "Bayazid Bistomi, following the instructions of the monks, tied a zunnor around his waist and hung the Bible around his neck." Many students made a mistake on this question. Because it was taken from the text with some changes. The



text does not mention "hanging the Bible". Students mistakenly marked this place as correct. Student number 11 failed to answer question 9, which was taken from the last part of the text, and this student, while remembering general information, clearly has difficulty remembering details. That's why we had more conversations with our students about methods and factors that are effective in understanding and reading the text. Because he made similar mistakes in other tasks.

In task 4, they should mark the letters corresponding to the numbers 1-12. In this task, 3 people did 55%, 5 people 45%, 2 people 60%, 3 people 57%, 2 people 65%. 10th, 11th students made the same mistake. Both of them mistakenly set the "date of creation of the universe". They marked "seven without the eighth" and the correct answer was six without the seventh. One of the most common mistakes is that "the ten years of the shepherding of Moses" is mentioned in this text, but our readers did not find it. Another such error is "twelfth not eleven". They replaced it with Musa (a). The eleven without the twelfth are the eleven brothers of Yusuf, peace be upon him.

In task 5, it is given to replace the phrases with the appropriate words. 2 people completed 100% without errors. 5 people made 1 mistake, 45% correct, and 10 people made 2 mistakes, 85% correct. He didn't know that "unexpected" events would happen. They had to replace the defined word in this sentence with a phrase, and determine which phrase's meaning is appropriate. The correct answer was the phrase "seven sleeps do not enter the dream". Some students also had difficulty in finding the phrase corresponding to the defined word in the sentence "The monk wants the saint to convert to Christianity. And the soul was hurt by his words (4)". Because there were too many similar phrases.

Pupils were able to organize the information given in this exercise, understand the function of lexical, syntactic units, artistic image tools used in the text; expressed relatively more general opinions in criticizing and reacting; were able to understand the given text. The assignments gave them practical skills in reading and understanding the text. Each assignment requires you to focus on a specific aspect of the text. Emphasizes not only the content of the text, the development of events, but also the fact that the reader should pay attention to the structure of the sentences, the use of auxiliary words and others in the process of reading the text. Such assignments help to improve reading literacy.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Reading and understanding are two different things, but they are inseparable. Reading itself is understanding. If information is not processed, comprehension has not occurred, then reading has not occurred. Reading is one of the most important skills and a starting point for learning about everything around you. This is essential for learning in school and throughout life. It is an essential skill that enables

students to understand texts, images and their messages, deepen their knowledge of beliefs and practices and ensure their transmission to the next generation, and connect previous experiences with new ones. Literacy in a given language is the correct mastering of the relationship between language units.

It is known that the role of the pedagogue is also important in students' reading and understanding of the text. First of all, when choosing a text, the teacher should have a clear idea about the skill he wants to teach the student, taking into account the child's age and interests. That is, the teacher should create specific strategies to achieve the desired result, and these strategies should act as a bridge between the teacher and the student in order to achieve the desired result.

Many factors can influence a child's reading ability, including background knowledge, ability, home environment, school experiences, and interest level. However, pure reading ability is directly related to a child's success in the five early literacy skills; phonemic awareness, alphabetic principles, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Parents and teachers can better encourage successful reading by understanding and nurturing these five key skills. Understanding the psycholinguistic basis of the error made by the student allows to develop an effective system of exercises to correct this deficiency.

It is necessary to analyze the texts given in the native language textbooks not only according to the rules, but also without mixing the grammar, pay attention to whether or not the students can understand the meaning of the words used in the text, determine the levels of knowledge and give the right direction. After all, the child should be able to express his opinion without grammatical rules and artistic expressions, and should be able to correctly analyze the information read or heard.

In order to develop reading comprehension literacy in mother tongue education, students need to acquire the specific reading skills needed to work with texts. The main way to improve the ability to understand the text is text analysis. There are many ways to work with text.

To develop reading literacy, it is important to follow several criteria when choosing a text. Some principles that should be taken into account when choosing a text for students: first of all, taking into account the level of knowledge, skills and qualifications of the students in the Uzbek language; to determine the level of students' Uzbek speech (the wealth of lexical and grammatical tools, the skills of expressing opinions); relatively constant errors in students' oral and written speech (pronunciation and spelling errors, use of words and word forms. Texts should be developmentally appropriate and interesting for students.

Tasks related to the text require students to find one or more independent parts that are clearly or openly stated, to find out the author's purpose, to determine the main idea, to understand the relationship, to understand the meaning of a word or phrase, to combine several parts of the text, the content or form of which may be unfamiliar, long or skills such as clear understanding of complex texts, ability to think independently, draw conclusions, compare, fully and in detail understand one or more texts, combine information from several texts are checked.

During the examination of experimental work, it was concluded that ensuring students' understanding of the texts they read depends on the correct selection and analysis of tasks given by the teacher, and improvement of activities according to their results. For example, a question-and-answer task requires the learner to accurately answer a single fact being asked, paying attention to each of the words that make up the question. Therefore, during the lessons, the teacher should explain to the students what is being asked in the question. Understanding the nature of the question leads to the correct answer.

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