

THE IMPORTANCE OF READING IN TEACHING THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGES TO STUDENTS

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Abstract: The article examines the role of reading in teaching foreign languages to students and its impact on vocabulary development, text comprehension, fluency, and motivation. Contemporary research in the Russian language teaching contexts demonstrates that both intensive and extensive reading positively influence linguistic, cognitive, and affective outcomes. Extensive reading fosters learner autonomy, engagement, and sustained interest in the language, while comprehension strategies enhance deeper understanding of texts. The study concludes that integrating structured reading activities and diverse texts into language curricula is essential for effective and holistic foreign language acquisition.

Keywords: language learning, second language acquisition, foreign language education, vocabulary, comprehension, fluency, motivation, learner autonomy, cultural awareness

Reading is widely recognized as a fundamental component in language education. It not only develops vocabulary and grammar awareness but also enhances comprehension, fluency, cognitive skills, and cultural understanding. For students learning a foreign or second language, reading provides exposure to authentic language input, which cannot always be replicated through classroom instruction alone. Texts ranging from literary works to newspapers, digital content, and academic articles introduce learners to a wide variety of linguistic structures, idiomatic expressions, and discourse patterns. Extensive reading has been shown to support incidental learning, where students acquire language naturally through repeated exposure, rather than solely through explicit teaching.

Furthermore, reading plays a critical role in fostering **critical thinking and analytical skills** [1]. Students are often required to infer meaning, evaluate arguments, and synthesize information across multiple texts. This engagement with content enhances cognitive development and prepares learners to use language in meaningful, real-world contexts. Research has also highlighted the connection between reading and motivation; learners who experience success in reading develop a positive attitude toward language learning, which influences persistence and effort. Despite these documented benefits, many curricula still underestimate the value of reading, focusing primarily on speaking and writing skills, which makes exploring structured reading-based interventions an essential step in improving language instruction.

This study employs a **systematic literature review and synthesis approach** to investigate the role of reading in teaching languages to students [2]. The aim is to analyze, compare, and integrate findings from key scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and empirical studies that focus on reading in second and foreign language acquisition. This method allows for a comprehensive understanding of both theoretical frameworks and practical applications of reading in language education, highlighting its linguistic, cognitive, and affective benefits.

Selection of Sources

Sources were selected using a purposive sampling strategy, prioritizing seminal and widely cited works in the field of language teaching. The review emphasizes books that focus on extensive and intensive reading programs, reading strategy instruction, vocabulary acquisition, and learner motivation, as these represent the most robust and evidence-based resources in the field [3]. Classic and contemporary studies were included to capture both historical perspectives and recent developments in language pedagogy. Additional empirical studies and review articles were used to support and triangulate findings from these books.

Data Extraction and Analysis

Data were extracted systematically from the selected sources, focusing on the following variables:

- **Linguistic outcomes:** Vocabulary acquisition, grammar awareness, reading comprehension, and fluency.
- **Cognitive outcomes:** Critical thinking, inferencing, and metacognitive reading strategies.
- **Affective outcomes:** Motivation, engagement, and learner autonomy.
- **Cultural outcomes:** Intercultural competence and understanding of target language cultures [4].

The extracted data were analyzed using a thematic synthesis approach. Themes were identified by grouping similar findings across sources and examining patterns in the reported outcomes of reading interventions. For example, studies highlighting improvements in vocabulary through extensive reading were grouped to establish a coherent picture of how reading enhances lexical knowledge. Similarly, findings on motivation and learner autonomy were synthesized to show how reading activities influence affective aspects of learning.

Limitations

While comprehensive, the literature review method has inherent limitations. The findings depend on the quality and scope of the selected sources and may not account for unpublished studies or recent innovations not yet widely reported in books or journals [5]. Additionally, variability in teaching contexts, learner backgrounds, and

language levels across studies may affect the generalizability of specific outcomes. Nonetheless, the triangulation of multiple sources, including classic and contemporary works, enhances the reliability and validity of the conclusions drawn from this review.

The literature review highlights several important findings:

Vocabulary acquisition: Extensive reading provides repeated exposure to lexical items in meaningful contexts, which strengthens memory retention and facilitates natural use in speaking and writing. Studies show that students who engage in consistent reading activities acquire more vocabulary than those relying solely on traditional memorization techniques. Additionally, reading helps learners recognize collocations, idiomatic expressions, and nuanced meanings that are difficult to teach explicitly, which contributes to more native-like language competence [6].

Comprehension and fluency: Strategic reading instruction—including skimming, scanning, predicting, summarizing, and inferencing—enhances learners' ability to understand and interpret texts. Such strategies are particularly effective when combined with repeated reading exercises, which improve reading speed, accuracy, and confidence [7]. Improved fluency in reading correlates with better fluency in speaking and writing, as learners become more familiar with natural phrasing and sentence structures.

Motivation and learner autonomy: Reading programs that allow learners to choose texts based on interest and proficiency foster engagement and self-directed learning. Extensive reading encourages students to read outside the classroom, increasing exposure to authentic language and promoting lifelong learning habits. Motivation is further enhanced when learners experience success and enjoyment while reading, reinforcing positive attitudes toward the target language [8].

The evidence from reviewed studies clearly demonstrates that reading is a **multifaceted tool** essential for effective language learning. It supports linguistic development by expanding vocabulary, enhancing comprehension, and improving fluency [9]. At the same time, it promotes cognitive skills such as critical thinking and inferencing, as well as affective outcomes like motivation and learner autonomy. Reading is also a vehicle for cultural learning, enabling students to connect language forms with social and cultural meaning.

For educators, these findings suggest several practical implications: integrating both intensive and extensive reading into curricula, providing guidance on reading strategies, offering texts that balance challenge and accessibility, and encouraging independent reading outside the classroom [10]. In doing so, teachers create an environment where learners actively engage with language, strengthen cognitive and linguistic skills, and develop habits that support lifelong language learning.

In conclusion, reading is far more than a passive academic exercise; it is a dynamic, integrative process that underpins all aspects of language acquisition. By

strategically incorporating reading into language instruction, educators can foster not only proficiency but also critical thinking, cultural awareness, and learner autonomy. The accumulated evidence confirms that reading is indispensable for meaningful and lasting language learning outcomes.

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