

DEVELOPING STUDENTS' COMPETENCIES IN READING AND UNDERSTANDING TEXTS ON LINGUOCULTURAL STUDIES

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Abstract: The development of students' competencies in reading and understanding texts on linguocultural studies occupies a significant place in modern educational practice. With the increasing demand for multicultural communication and global integration, today's learners encounter a variety of texts that are rooted in social and cultural contexts, which can present unique interpretative challenges. Literacy skills now extend beyond the boundaries of grammar and vocabulary, requiring learners to build nuanced comprehension abilities that incorporate cultural awareness, critical thinking, and context-sensitive analysis.

Key words: linguocultural competence, reading comprehension, student development, intercultural communication, contextual analysis, cultural awareness, academic literacy, language education, text interpretation, higher education.

Linguocultural studies, as a discipline, are deeply intertwined with history, sociology, philosophy, and communication science, among others. The texts in this field are rich in cultural references, idiomatic expressions, allusions, and distinct worldview perspectives that frequently go unnoticed without targeted training. The competency to read, analyze, and evaluate such texts is an asset for any student aspiring to participate meaningfully in global dialogues or professional contexts involving intercultural communication. One of the foundational stages in the process is the cultivation of deep reading skills. Students must learn to look beyond surface meanings and recognize underlying cultural motifs, values, and norms featured in linguocultural texts. This typically involves moving from literal comprehension toward inferential and evaluative comprehension. In doing so, learners are no longer passive recipients of information but become active constructors of

meaning who must constantly reconcile their own background knowledge with what is presented in the text. An essential dimension of competence in this area is the ability to identify and interpret culture-specific items, or *realia* embedded in texts. These include references to historical events, traditions, institutions, social rituals, cuisine, clothing, and many other culture-bound elements. The recognition of such aspects is critical, as they provide context for the author's intentions and societal values depicted in the text. Successful reading of linguocultural texts also depends on students' vocabulary knowledge, particularly their familiarity with culture-specific lexis and phraseology. This goes beyond memorizing isolated words to understanding how language constructs and reflects cultural identities. Developing this competence requires continuous exposure to authentic texts, supplemented with carefully selected materials that highlight interlinguistic and intercultural differences [1].

Contextual analysis emerges as an integral part of understanding linguocultural texts. Context is multifaceted in such cases: it may include the social, historical, cultural, or even political circumstances in which the text was produced. Learners need to be guided to evaluate a range of contextual cues while reading, from the author's background and the intended audience to the societal norms of the period in question. This interpretive process fosters a broader, more holistic engagement with the text and deepens critical thinking abilities. Reading comprehension in linguocultural studies demands engagement with various forms of texts—fiction, non-fiction, journal articles, essays, memoirs, and other genres. Each type of text offers its own conventions, styles, and cultural connotations. The competence to discern and interpret these differences becomes another important facet in the student's skill set. For instance, texts from different genres may employ different rhetorical devices or strategies for presenting cultural norms, and learners need to develop sensitivity to these nuances. Analytic skills are closely connected with the capacity to synthesize information from multiple portions of a text or from several texts. This skill is indispensable when students are required to compare and contrast differing cultural perspectives within linguocultural studies. The ability to cross-reference, make connections, and draw informed conclusions reflects a high degree of critical engagement

with the materials. Such syntheses facilitate the formation of well-rounded, culturally literate individuals ready to interact in diverse environments [2].

Effective development of competencies in this field is also reliant on students' metacognitive abilities—their awareness of personal learning processes and strategies. Students must continuously evaluate their understanding, monitor their progress, and employ different techniques when encountering difficult texts. Through self-reflection and guided instruction, learners identify gaps in their cultural knowledge and develop strategies for overcoming comprehension barriers. Motivation and positive attitudes also play a vital role in students' progress toward becoming skilled readers in linguocultural studies. Intrinsic interest in learning about other cultures, open-mindedness, and a willingness to embrace ambiguity contribute significantly to sustained engagement. Educators have an important responsibility in shaping students' attitudes by fostering a supportive environment that values curiosity, respect for diversity, and intellectual risk-taking [3].

Instructional approaches for cultivating these competencies are most effective when they are student-centered and focused on authentic communication. Teachers facilitate the process by designing meaningful learning activities, creating opportunities for interpretative discussion, and guiding critical inquiry. The use of scaffolding techniques is also advisable; gradually withdrawing support as students become more proficient promotes autonomy and confidence in dealing with complex texts. Integration of multimedia and digital resources enriches the learning environment and provides learners with diverse perspectives. By incorporating audio-visual materials, news articles, podcasts, and digital archives, educators expose students to a wider range of discourse types and cultural representations. This integration supports the development of listening and viewing comprehension skills, which are equally important for holistic linguocultural understanding [4].

Assessment practices must align with the objectives of developing competencies in this area. Traditional testing methods, such as multiple-choice questions, are often insufficient to measure depth of understanding and critical engagement. Instead, assessment tasks should encourage open-ended responses, interpretive essays, reflective writing, and collaborative projects that require analysis and synthesis of linguocultural

materials. Such assessments not only provide insights into students' comprehension, but also foster further growth in analytical and communicative abilities. Professional development of educators themselves is another key factor in enhancing students' competencies. Teachers need to remain informed about the latest research, pedagogical strategies, and cultural trends in linguocultural studies. Ongoing training, participation in workshops, and engagement with scholarly communities encourage reflective practice and bolster teachers' capacity to support learners effectively [5].

Interdisciplinary collaboration contributes strongly to the competency development process. By engaging with colleagues from fields such as history, anthropology, cultural studies, and media studies, teachers and students can access broader perspectives. Team-teaching, interdisciplinary projects, and cross-curricular initiatives create immersive learning experiences where cultural knowledge and analytic skills are deepened. Continued progress in this field depends on responsive curriculum development that takes into account students' backgrounds, interests, and needs. Flexible, learner-centered curricula allow the adaptation of materials and methodologies to match students' prior experiences and learning styles. Such curriculum design fosters inclusivity and ensures that every student has the opportunity to develop the key competencies required for successful engagement with linguocultural texts. Despite its complexities, the process of fostering competencies in reading and understanding linguocultural texts is a deeply rewarding endeavor. It equips students not simply to navigate foreign cultures, but to appreciate their own cultural positions and biases. Through this process, learners develop empathy, open-mindedness, and intellectual flexibility, which are among the most valued qualities in today's interconnected world. The acquisition of these skills has lasting implications beyond the academic realm; it prepares students for responsible citizenship, professional success, and lifelong learning. The world's increasing cultural interdependence makes these competencies not only desirable but essential. Higher education institutions must therefore prioritize the ongoing cultivation of students' abilities to comprehend, interpret, and appreciate texts rooted in diverse linguistic and cultural traditions [6].

The responsibility for fostering these skills does not rest solely on educators or institutions. Students must take an active role in their development, seeking out

opportunities for exposure to new texts, engaging in dialogue with peers from varied backgrounds, and reflecting critically on their interpretations. This ongoing personal investment ensures the sustainability of learning and the transferability of competencies to wider contexts.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the mastery of competencies associated with reading and understanding linguocultural studies texts is critical in preparing students to navigate an increasingly complex and interconnected world. This process calls for more than rote acquisition of language; it demands cultural sensitivity, critical acumen, and active engagement with authentic, contextually rich texts. By fostering these competencies, educational systems enable students to develop as thoughtful, adaptable, and open-minded global citizens. Through the combined efforts of learners, teachers, and institutions, the cultivation of these abilities promises not only academic achievement but also contributes significantly to the broader goals of multicultural understanding and harmonious coexistence.

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