

icCSBs 2020**The Annual International Conference on Cognitive - Social and Behavioural Sciences****TEACHING TO WORK WITH LINEAR TEXTS IS A WAY OF DOING HOMEWORK**

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Abstract

The article describes the results of the study of an essential problem in modern education, involving students' doing homework assignments based on linear texts. Modern research in the field of linguistics, psycholinguistics, and cognitive psychology concludes that schoolchildren find it increasingly hard to read and understand linear text, preferring smaller forms of nonlinear texts. However, educational and scientific texts that students face every day in school classes or when reading literary works, are linear texts. In this regard, it becomes necessary to purposefully teach schoolchildren skills of working with linear texts, primarily to promote their productive independent activity. The article explains the concepts of a text and a linear text, suggesting the definitions to which the authors adhere. It states the relevance of teaching schoolchildren to work with linear text when organizing homework in the Russian language and literature classes, and suggests the most effective ways and techniques of working with linear texts. These techniques make it possible for schoolchildren to prepare for lessons independently, understanding texts fully and correctly. The article is based on experimental research and is addressed to special subject teachers, school administrators, methodologists, researchers in the field of education, as well as textbook and curriculum developers.

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1. Introduction

“When elements of the language shape a text of any form and in any conditions of speech communication, invariant resources of the language are transformed into a specific work in the process of communication... they become a text” (Kopytov, 2011, p.1). The text is an important object of humanitarian research, with the main characteristics reflected in more than 250 definitions. However, it is still a topic of discussion today. In this study, the term “text” means “a written message in the form of a written document, consisting of a number of statements united by different types of lexical, grammatical and logical connections, having certain moral characteristics and pragmatic goals expressed in an appropriate literary form” (Galperin, 1974, p. 67).

According to many researchers, linearity is the main characteristic of a text. Linearity is defined as “logical sequence of informative statements based on the development of the main theme / plot line, representing a type of speech that is united in its function and its semantics” (Perfileva, 2003, p. 134). Since thinking in the modern world is getting increasingly non-linear, a linear text loses its self-sufficiency and its one-dimensionality, becoming non-linear. However, the linear text maintains ground, being widely used in various spheres of human activity. It plays a leading part in fiction, scientific literature and reporting, and is key to teaching schoolchildren.

The modern world is characterized by an increasingly important role of information in human life. The information is present as texts of different styles, types and genres, that are posted on Internet, presented on screens of an electronic device, or printed on paper in the traditional way. For purposes of professional and personal self-realization, it is important for a person to master various ways of working with text. Therefore, a key task of modern education is to teach schoolchildren the basics of working with texts which are a quintessential form of presenting information.

2. Problem Statement

School education is based on working with texts. These can be large works of literature and small-scale educational and scientific texts, including those posted on Internet. As a rule, the latter feature informational articles illustrated with photographs or pictures, info graphics, tables, notes, dictionary or encyclopedic articles containing hyperlinks, etc. (Aleksandrova, Dobrotina, Gosteva, Vasil'evyh, & Uskova, 2019, p. 79; Galaktionova & Kazakova, 2017). Using them is an undoubtedly important and necessary work. However, recent studies (Bezrukih & Komkova, 2008; Camejo Partagas, Sanchez Riesgo, & Plasencia Correa, 2018; Karvonen, Tainio, & Routarinne, 2018; Killian, Hennigs, & Langer, 2012; Prensky, 2001) show that it has become increasingly difficult for schoolchildren to perceive ordinary linear texts, and it is hard for them to work with verbal texts.

The modern generation has formed a type of perception called mosaic thinking. It differs from textual perception. This is an evidence of the modern world, a certain vector in the development of a person's relationship with information, when a large number of extracurricular factors influence the shaping of children's thinking and perception. Electronic means of communication, such as computers, computer games, the Internet, and mobile phones are among them. In other words, some cognitive skills are developing at the expense of others ones (Frumkin, 2010; Rosen, 2007). If schoolchildren see a continuous

text without pictures, headings, or links, many of them just don't read it. However, educational and scientific articles and publications (a paragraph of a textbook, a chapter in a book, etc.), and most importantly, works of fiction, are exactly such texts (Aristova et al., 2018). School education begins with introduction to linear text. Working with linear text is the most common and fruitful type of reading in elementary school. However, teachers of later grades are faced with students who are not able to understand what they read, to narrate the content of a linear text, to highlight its parts, or to explain its main idea. It all means that children's interest in reading in general is failing. This issue is especially pressing when schoolchildren do their schoolwork at home. Their activities are described as "schoolchildren's independent extracurricular educational activities, designed and accompanied by a teacher in order to achieve the planned results in learning" (Uskova, 2019, p. 43), when children have to achieve mastery of courses presented in the form of text, thereby preparing for lessons at school (Cadime, Cruz, Silva, & Ribeiro, 2017; Göllner et al., 2017; Mora & Escardibul, 2018; Núñez et al., 2017).

3. Research Questions

The importance of this study is determined by an urgent need to teach schoolchildren to work with linear text in classroom and in their extracurricular activities in order to successfully complete their homework and continue self-education throughout their lives. The article provides a rationale for teaching schoolchildren to work with linear texts within their educational activities, and proposes effective methods and techniques that make it possible to do it within school curriculum (in the context of Russian language and literature lessons).

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide a rationale for relevance of teaching schoolchildren to work with linear text, to determine the most effective methods and techniques for working with linear text, which will make it possible for students to independently study for lessons, fully and correctly understanding texts that they read.

5. Research Methods

In the course of work, we used the following methods of research: systematization of the results of pedagogical and methodological research in order to determine the state of coverage of this problem; generalization of the author's experience in creating textbooks and teaching aids; reflection of the author's own scientific and pedagogical activity; observation and analysis of the ways schoolchildren work with educational texts and with literary texts; questioning of participants in the educational process.

6. Findings

In the practice of teaching Russian as an academic subject in educational system, based on observations of schoolchildren aged 10 to 12 years, data were obtained, according to which two thirds of students do not complete the part of their homework that requires working on educational or scientific texts.

Within this system, reading theoretical explanations that include rules with commentaries and examples, and doing exercises based on the perused text is among traditional homework tasks (Uskova, 2018, p. 786). Theoretical explanations on topics under study are also given in class, and the algorithm for their application is studied by doing a number of exercises. However, as the research has shown, the majority of schoolchildren start homework without reading the text in their schoolbook. When asked about the reasons of doing so, schoolchildren explained that they “remembered everything from the lesson”, “they don’t want to read text without pictures”, “everything is complicated and incomprehensible in textbooks”, “they have problems following the authors’ ideas, they need someone to explain as they read.” Those of the students who carefully read an educational text before completing their homework showed good results: the teacher identified fewer mistakes, the works were formatted in accordance with the requirements, and these students were able to formulate the studied rules and comment on them at the lesson.

In the practice of teaching literature, the text acts as an object of study (literary text) or as educational material. In literature class, the main task is to study literary text, as the text itself makes one think, reflect, and seek answers to issues formulated in it. There are different types of reading, and each one has its own goals. As a homework assignment, semantic reading seems to be most relevant, as it allows students to comprehend the information contained in the text without haste, and to catch all the details of the narrative. Reading a literary text is usually accompanied by a number of tasks related to understanding its ideas and stylistic features, such as answering questions, preparing a retelling (short, detailed, creative, etc.), making an outline of the text, writing a character description, feedback, essay, etc. If the students have not read the literary text, then none of these tasks can be completed. In turn, meaningful reading, such as keeping a reader’s diary with quotes, impressions, or pictures, contributes to successful completion of homework (Belyaeva, Dobrotina, & Kritarova, 2019).

Meaningful reading of a linear literary or educational text helps increase the effectiveness of schoolchildren’s homework. In this regard, we urgently need to teach schoolchildren to read linear texts independently and meaningfully in the process of doing homework.

In order to develop the skills of meaningful reading when doing homework, following methods / types of work with linear text may be suggested.

6.1. Changing methods of recording homework

In Russian Federation, electronic students’ diaries have been introduced everywhere, providing teachers with unlimited opportunities for recording and commenting on homework. So, besides writing down a task “learn the rule on page 25”, teachers can make an extended record, such as: “Page 25: read the theoretical material, make a thesis plan (illustrative / short / including quotes, etc.), and learn the rule. Prepare a spoken reply according to the plan.” This approach to writing homework focuses students’ attention on studying theoretical material and on completing practical tasks based on rules, which increases the percentage of students completing this task.

6.2. Changing approaches to organizing work with linear text

Doing homework based on reading linear texts causes difficulties for schoolchildren for several reasons. They are due to insufficient skills of meaningful and functional reading; schoolchildren consider

homework, such as reading a paragraph, optional, deem it possible to “look over” the written text, to read just its headings or fragments highlighted in a different colour or font. So, before getting a task for Russian language homework, which includes the study of educational and scientific text, a student should be prepared to understand it. In class, the teacher teaches schoolchildren to use a pencil when reading or to comment on the text, and students use the acquired skills when doing homework.

The teacher reads a text paragraph by paragraph and engages a dialogue with students based on following questions and tasks: What topic are we studying? Formulate it. We will now read information on this topic. Why am I starting to read the text paragraph by paragraph? What happens if I read the whole text right away? In which case will it be easier for you to understand me? Take a look at the first paragraph: what is highlighted in a different colour, font, or background? Why? Underline the keywords in the paragraph. Briefly state the main point of the paragraph. Give examples to illustrate the paragraph. What is not clear in this paragraph? Comment on the following phrases in the paragraph.

Homework must be connected to the text under study and continued by the students independently. Following tasks may be suggested: Why a text that you study cannot be understood if you don't read the material of the previous paragraph first? Answer in writing. Choose examples that illustrate the main ideas of a text that you study in literature classes. Compose a test concerning a text that you have read and post it online, for your classmates. Write a motivation letter inviting your classmates to take this test.

Lack of understanding of a text's content may cause serious problems for students in doing homework. Reading works of Russian classical literature of the past requires extensive historical and cultural knowledge, which students do not have, as well as meaningful cultural commentaries. In this regard, students are invited to compile a dictionary of a literary work while reading it at home. This means that a student is invited to write down each unfamiliar word and find its meaning. Thus, students will be able to better understand the content of the text and enrich their vocabulary.

6.3. Using multimedia technologies

The use of multimedia technologies contributes to teaching schoolchildren to study linear texts when doing homework, which increases their interest and motivation for learning in general. Working with multimedia technologies includes in particular the creation of book trailers and teasers (Ehret, Hollett, & Jocius, 2016; Orbe, Jumbo, Tejedor, & Cervi, 2019). A book trailer (a term borrowed from English) is an advertising digital video telling about a book one has read (Machekhina & Sevost'yanova, 2017). A book may be also described in a teaser (from the English term meaning an advertisement built like a riddle and containing some information without showing the product itself). In this sense, book trailers that precede a “book's publication may be considered as teasers” (Shcherbinina, 2012, p.3). These types of homework require conscientious reading of a literary text, since their creation demands knowledge of literary sources. The skills of creating book trailers and teasers should of course be mastered beforehand, while working in class with teacher.

7. Conclusion

Attracting teachers' attention to purposefully teaching the skill of working with linear texts in classroom helps to increase children's ability to understand what they read at home, while motivating them

to read more, to pursue the goals of self-education and self-development, which, in turn, improves the quality of educational process as a whole.

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