Communication strategy in the area of readership of 15-year-old pupils in the Moravian-Silesian Region

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Abstract The article informs about a qualitatively oriented survey of communication strategies (specific reader strategies) for selected fifteen-year-old primary school pupils in the MS Region (Moravian-Silesian Region). The text describes, analyzes, and evaluates the selected outcomes of the exploratory survey of problem phenomena using the semi-structured conversation method with primary school pupils. The aim of the text is to describe factors that can affect the level of reading strategies of pupils in the home and school environments.

Key words communication and reading strategies, metamotivation and metacognition of the pupil, self-regulation, literacy models

1. INTRODUCTION

Currently, the social need to be communicative and literate (to be able to read and write effectively) is increasing. At present, it is clear that the ability of an adult to work on the labour market assumes he/she has a sufficient functional literacy level.

Reading literacy is a key area of functional literacy, and due to the alarming reports from the outcomes of the international reading literacy survey (PISA, 2009, etc.) [5], it is clear that Czech 15-year-old pupils do not reach the average levels of reader strategies so that they have a wide range of communicative skills). The Czech Republic is one of the EU countries in which the 15-year-old pupils of primary schools have long-term significant shortcomings in the field of reading (especially in the focus of text comprehension), in terms of their qualitative as well as quantitative occurrences.

Pupils from the MS Region have achieved inadequately worse results (in the PISA 2009 survey) [5] than the same age peers in other regions of the Czech Republic. Problems were also perceived among the pupils of the Ústecký and Karlovarský regions. Current reading literacy readings (PISA 2018) are now awaited.

2. METAMOTIVATION, THE METACOGNITION OF THE PUPIL, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION COMPETENCES

As an important starting point of our survey, we consider meta-activation and metacognition of the pupil in the field of reader education, and the development of communicative competencies that can be considered key to the life of individuals in the society of the 21st century.

Developing the pupil's metacognitive potential means creating sufficient cognitive activities in the field of educating the reader. Activating readers in pre-reading phases, while reading, and after reading texts, to develop a range of cognitive control and planning tools for pupils, including the management of reader-motivated activities, are among the key tasks of reading education in both home and school contexts.

By correctly diagnosing the reader's understanding of information in the communication process, especially when working with texts, it is possible to determine the role of subjective and objective factors that can be used to achieve both cognitive and metacognitive goals, leading to a higher level of understanding of information data in everyday life. The pupil's cognitive growth performance is supported by a sufficiently wide database of learning and reading strategies. The regulation of reading speeds, orientation in the text, planning a way to understand unknown words, phrases, sentences, sentence context, and the whole complex of readings leads to metacognitive competence of the development of cognitive and affective expressions of pupils while working with the texts which, at the same time, means expanding the overall understanding of the potential of intelligence.

Games, reader activities, storytelling, sharing of reading experiences and their analysis, reflection, and other mobilization intentions and actions lead to increased efforts to achieve effective learning (e.g. self-regulation of learning by reading with comprehension, etc.). Self-regulation can be understood as an opportunity which can be developed throughout one's entire life. Developing holistic insights into the minds of others when working with texts can be performed through spontaneous or semi-structured interviews with pupils (so-called verbalization).

Hoferová et al (1998, pp. 66-72 in Mareš, 2013, p. 242) [3] classified strategies based on self-regulation into four groups: a) cognitive strategies; b) metacognitive strategies, c) strategies for self-knowledge; d) motivation strategy. We consider important strategies that lead the pupil to recognize what he/she does not currently know, what he/she does not currently understand. Additional strategic strategies include procedures to monitor progress in learning and reading by developing critical thinking,

setting achievable goals, a sense of self-reflection, creating reading patterns, co-operation, thinking, asking problem-based questions on the read texts, arguing and summarising what has been read.

Being reader-literate means to have a set of key competences, because they themselves have a super-subject nature.

The current world trend in the development of reader education can be seen in the constructivist conception of nationwide testing in the field of reading literacy, not only in international research surveys (PIRLS, PISA, PIAAC), but also in the nationwide testing of 15-year-old pupils under JPZk (Uniform entrance examinations) during the transition from primary to secondary schools, as well as in the maturita project for the testing of pupils of the 4th year of secondary schools, ending with the maturita/school leaving exam (state exam forms).

Monitoring the quality of the learning process in terms of the development of reading strategies can also be seen in textbooks and curriculum documents RVP ZV and others (Framework education programme for primary education).

We should not forget about literacy models in relation to cognitive theories and models of information processing. For example, B. Bloom (1968) [1] emphasizes that each individual is able to fulfil a task if his or her individual needs are respected over time.

3. INFLUENCE OF FACTORS INFLUENCING LITERACY

There are many important classifications of factors that affect human literacy. Objective factors are based on the social, cultural, and economic contexts. Conversely, the inner (subjective) factors derive from the innate dispositions, characters, and personality manifestations of an individual.

Doležalová (2005) [2] divided the objective factors of literacy according to environment into three categories: a) macro-environment; b) local environment; c) microenvironment. In agreement with the authors Wild (2012) [6] and Najvarová (2008) [4], it is possible to agree with the fact that it is important to influence the literacy level of pupils regularly, interactively, by activating work with high quality (diverse) texts and sufficient thought value in the school and home environments.

4. EMPIRICAL PART

4.1 Research aims

The main research aim is:

- to characterize the level of communication reading strategies of 15-year-old pupils in MS Region,
- analyze and describe the factors influencing the level of readership strategies of 15-year-old pupils in MS Region.

4.2 Research problems

We are interested in:

- which factors affect the level of reading strategies from the point of view of 15-year-old pupils in MS Region,

- which reader strategies are used by pupils when reading different types of texts, and which process does the learner use to understand the text,
- how a pupil expresses their personal relationship to books,
- what the ideas and reflections are of pupils reading today.

4.3 Research sample

For the research sample, we chose 15-year-old pupils (respondents), who form the basic research file.

4.4 Implementation of research

Of 10 approached primary schools, 5 primary schools participated in our research. We worked with 10 respondents, because each school was represented by 2 pupils from the 9th year of primary school.

4.5 Research methodology

For our research intentions in the empirical phase of the survey, we chose interviews with selected respondents the pedagogical research method. Interviewing is a method that collects data about pedagogical reality through direct verbal communication between the researcher and the respondent. The advantage of the conversation is the establishment of personal contact, along with the opportunity to identify personal motives, motivation, and attitudes of the respondent.

As a method of managing the interviews, we chose a semi-structured conversation style. We wrote the data in the written form during the interview, as well as immediately after the conversation ended. Due to the characteristics of the semi-structured interview, we approached the implementation of the interviews with a natural flow of ideas in interpersonal communication.

In a semi-structured interview, we worked with several alternative (or free) answers to individual questions. The respondent had the opportunity to explain his claims, to justify them.

This is a material composition of mixed research design with a predominance of a qualitative nature. We decided to organize individual interviews in the school environment.

The semi-structured conversation included 3 thematic areas:

1. reading strategy
2. school and reading
3. appropriate methods in working with texts contributing to the development of reading strategies in teaching Czech Language and Literature

In each of the thematic areas, a database of questions was constructed. Respondents' individual responses were categorized into related groups, and then described, analyzed, and the most frequent responses were evaluated.

Selected interpretation of research outputs in the thematic area No. 1:
From the partial statistical answers of the pupils it is clear that the respondents' answers can be categorized.
Pupils express what processes, reader strategies, and why a possible understanding of the text occurs.

Question:
Are you searching for the main idea in your text to understand the text?
We can divide these pupils' answers into 2 groups.

A) Why?
Pupils give the reason (why) to search for the main idea in the text for their understanding:
1. for the sake of understanding,
2. to remember better.

We picked the following answers from the pupils' most frequent responses:

Ad 1:
▪ so that I can understand the text (to understand the text),
▪ I usually understand it immediately,
▪ so that I can understand what I read.

Ad 2:
▪ so that I can remember it better,
▪ I better remember the text and the whole story,
▪ so that I can train my memory.

B) How?
Pupils introduce the way (how) they look for the main idea in the text to understand it:
1. repeated reading,
2. concretizing other ways (trying to understand the plot, thinking, searching for keywords, placing auxiliary words, searching for summarizing ideas, lessons, etc.).

We picked the following answers from the pupils' most frequent responses:

Ad 1:
▪ I read it a more times,
▪ mostly yes, I read it more times,
▪ I mostly do not search for the main idea, but sometimes I read it twice to understand it.

Ad 2:
▪ I search for keywords,
▪ I think about it for myself,
▪ if I do not understand something, I will ask my mum or someone else,
▪ I ask myself different questions and I try to understand what the author writes about.

Question:
Do you ask helping questions while reading the text?
We can divide these pupils' answers into 2 groups.

A) Why?
Pupils ask helping questions while reading the text:
1. for a better understanding of the story,
2. for success in learning.

We picked the following answers from the pupils' most frequent responses:

Ad 1:
▪ for a better understanding of the story,
▪ I wonder how the story ends,
▪ when I'm surprised by the reaction of a character in the story.

Ad 2:
▪ only when I study,
▪ I don't have a problem asking questions, that's how I learn,
▪ I gradually learn by asking questions.

Question:
What and why affects reading comprehension?
We can divide these pupils' answers into 4 groups.

Pupils state that the factors that affect text comprehension include:
1. reading level (how well students read technically)
2. the richness of the vocabulary, the way of thinking, knowledge of sentences construction,
3. attention of the reader,
4. favourable climate (reading environment).

We picked the following answers from the pupils' most frequent responses:

Ad 1:
▪ it can affect reading levels,
▪ it can affect how good readers we are.

Ad 2:
▪ it affects, we must have an appetite to read, as well as silence,
▪ also the number of words I know and recognise,
▪ influence yes, e.g. analysis of sentences, for example sentence breakdown
▪ due to thinking.

Ad 3:
▪ it can affect, if I pay attention,
▪ it can affect thought processes and concentration,
▪ it may affect our focus or concentration.

Ad 4:
▪ it can change the understanding of the characters when I'm calm,
▪ the meaning of the text may be affected,
▪ attention, calm, quiet environment.

Selected interpretation of research outputs in the thematic area No. 2:
Pupils express why the selected actions and activities in Czech Language and Literature lessons in the field of reading education develop reading strategies, which contributes to the understanding of texts (e.g. textbooks, and so on).

Question:
Why do you study and analyze text in your mother tongue?
We can divide these pupils' answers into 4 groups.

Pupils state that they devote time to reading and text analysis in Czech Language and Literature lessons:
1. in order to learn and understand something (in various ways),
2. in order to learn something by heart,
3. in order to better understand the text,
4. without giving any reason (they do not answer why, they do not give a reason).

We picked the following answers from the pupils' most frequent responses:

Ad 1:
▪ to know what we are reading about and what genre it is,
▪ it helps me grasp the text, understand it and remember it,
▪ it is good for us in the future (the teacher will explain it to us).

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Ad 2:
▪ in order to learn.

Ad 3:
▪ in order to better understand the text,
▪ we talk about the text in a group, then I understand it.

Ad 4:
▪ in Czech Language and Literature lessons we devote time to texts.

Selected interpretation of research outputs in the thematic area No. 3:
Pupils most often consider "conversations about the read information" to be a suitable method for developing reading strategies in teaching Czech Language and Literature.

We can divide these pupils' answers into 3 groups.
1. Pupils consider conversations about the read information to be an interactive and quick way to understand the read information.
2. Pupils consider conversations about the read information to be an interactive way of individual understanding, but not quickly.
3. Pupils do not consider conversations about the read information to be an interactive and quick path to individual understanding.

WHY? Conversation on read information
We picked the following answers from the pupils' most frequent responses:

Ad 1.
▪ the conversation is fast, I have an opportunity for an exchange of views on the read text, so that I can understand everything,
▪ the strength of the conversation is the necessity to quickly respond to the comprehension of the text, and adjust the view of the problem,
▪ the conversation is the quick exchange of opinion in order to understand what I have read,
▪ the conversation is a quick check of understanding in a pair with someone.

Ad 2.
▪ the conversation about the read text can take a long time, but then I find out that I either understood the read information or I didn't,
▪ the conversation is a different story about whether I have an opinion on the text read, or I can change my opinion according to whom I believe,
▪ the conversation is a quick reaction to what I have read.

Ad 3.
▪ the conversation is one person talking about the read text,
▪ the conversation is telling the story to a classmate.

5. CONCLUSION

Reading strategy:
Pupils consider basic reader strategies leading to understanding in communication situations, especially when working with text, primarily searching for the main idea, for the sake of quick understanding and remembering information.

Pupils seek the main idea by repeatedly reading and searching for keywords. Text comprehension is aided by pupils asking questions in order to improve their understanding of the story. It is also interesting to find out that asking questions about the read text helps pupils towards learning success.

Pupils perceive success in the mechanical reading of texts, stylistic dexterity, rich vocabulary, and mental maturity as key factors influencing text comprehension. The pupils also attributed reader attention and a favourable reading environment (climate) as important factors.

School and reading
As a reason why pupils read, they very often say: to learn something, to understand something, to remember something.

Appropriate methods for working with text to develop reader strategies in Czech Language and Literature
Appropriate methods for developing reader strategies involve pupil interviews, discussion on the texts, dramatization.

The key is the conversation on read information method because, according to the pupils themselves, it is a quick way to understand the read information that allows for individual understanding.

The speed of the conversation is appreciated by students because of good (general) understanding of the text, and the possibility of controlling the understanding in pairs. Less often, pupils consider the conversation as a kind of test of understanding the information in the text. Less often, pupils consider the conversation to be an understanding of the text for classification (grading) in the classroom.

Most often, the pupils think that the conversation may take as long as it takes for the pupil to understand the read text. Less often, pupils responded that the conversation was a response to what they were reading. The least often, pupils responded that the conversation was timed to be as long as necessary for both partners to understand everything in the text the same way.

The article highlighted the factors that affect the level of readership of fifteen-year-old pupils. As to the control question of whether pupils are considered reader literate, all 10 respondents answered that they considered themselves to be reader-literate, most often reading 3 books per calendar year. Pupils prefer to read in their home environment, but they like to talk to their classmates about the books they have read. Pupils tend to share less reader experiences with their parents.

We are in agreement with respondents in that we consider the development of reader strategies by appropriate methods in a favourable reading climate at school or at home to be one of the most important reader-driven activities that lead to the development of reading and communicative competence for everyday life, both today and in the future.

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