

UDC 811.11-112

DOI: [https://doi.org/10.18524/2307-4604.2018.1\(40\).137081](https://doi.org/10.18524/2307-4604.2018.1(40).137081)

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## READING LITERARY TEXTS IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF GREEK AS A SECOND FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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*The current study offers an opportunity to highlight pedagogical methods and approaches that the task of reading allows us to use, and more specifically the task of reading Greek children's literature. In this study I will present the complex skill of reading which can be developed on many levels in order to enhance students' comprehension of oral and written language as well as facilitate their oral and written language production. In the context of intercultural education and foreign language learning, reading enables students to analyze cultural content, values and ideas that are an integral part of learning a foreign language and it also enables them to develop their intercultural skills. The foreign language texts that students read offer images of a people's culture in their everyday life, which invite students to make comparisons and reach the point of understanding. The skill of reading will allow us to achieve our ultimate goal which is the skillful comprehension and production of Greek as a second foreign language.*

**Key words:** reading skills, intercultural education, Greek.

**Подковиророфф Н. Читання літературних текстів у навчанні грецької як іноземної мови.** Стаття присвячена дослідженню педагогічних методів та підходів до формування навичок читання у процесі навчання грецької як іноземної мови.

**Ключові слова:** навички читання, міжкультурна освіта, грецька мова.

**Подковырофф Н. Чтение литературных текстов в обучении греческому как иностранному языку.** Статья посвящена исследованию педагогических методов и подходов к формированию навыков чтения в процессе обучения греческому как иностранному языку.

**Ключевые слова:** навыки чтения, межкультурное образование, греческий язык.

First of all, we would like to focus on the use of reading as a teaching method in general – by providing a definition to it and analyzing its elements, so that we highlight the role that reading plays and then explain the reason why we choose to use children's literature.

In the age of television and computers, reading still remains even today the best cultural tool and the most useful source of scientific and cultural information.

It is important to point out that reading as a pedagogical method enjoys a central place in the teaching of Greek as a foreign language at the Centre for Modern Greek Studies of Odessa National University. It is an essential component of the study programme not only of the Translation Department but also of all foreign language departments of the university. Having the opportunity to include reading in the study programme of Modern Greek, I did not hesitate to do so as well.

For reading to be effective it is necessary to use a teaching approach which enables the learners to process a text not only on a linguistic and informational

level, but also to move to the level of verbal understanding and semantic interpretation of the language of a text (Table 1).

Reading is a twofold interpretation of signs made possible through synthetic and analytic processing and, as a cognitive technique which aims at the comprehension of a text, it allows the reader to enrich and broaden his or her cultural horizon as well as contributes to the development of his or her personality (Figure 1).

While synthetic reading enables the teacher to introduce lexical and grammatical structures, drawing the students' attention to the language content of a text, analytic reading requires that the students approach a text as a whole.

In synthetic reading the reader usually moves through a text in a linear fashion, which allows him or her to focus on morphological and graphological features of the text, as well as to detect key words (words that answer key questions – Who? What? How? Why?), which let him or her interpret the general meaning of the text.

Analytic reading requires a preparatory study and a sociolinguistic approach of a text.

In the context of intercultural teaching and learning, language teaching creates an ideal setting for dialogue and contact. The intercultural approach to teaching foreign languages through reading enables the students to analyze cultural content, values, beliefs and ideas which are an integral part of learning a foreign language and it also enables them to develop their intercultural skills. The foreign language texts offer images of a people's culture in their everyday life, which invite the students to make comparisons and reach the point of understanding.

The first processing of a text enables the reader to consciously enrich his or her vocabulary and delve deeper into a specific topic.

The overall processing of a text gives students the opportunity to recognize things that they ignored before as well as elements that they already knew, which makes them feel more confident and more motivated to continue learning a foreign language more effectively.

Of course this does not automatically mean that the student has attained the goal of complete understanding. Our research shows that understanding written language is the result of systematic learning, training and practice where a reader is able to reconstruct the meaning of a text through discussion. Therefore, reading in the teaching of Greek as a foreign language does not only aim at the comprehension of written language but it also automatically aims at the production of spoken and written language.

The texts for reading should be chosen very carefully so that they are appropriate for the use of a multifaceted approach to reading as described above, and so that their language level corresponds to the students' level of proficiency. It is only when the right text has been chosen that reading in a synthetic and analytic way will have the desired effect, otherwise there will only be a preliminary text processing that will result in inadequate understanding.

Figure 1. Reading involves:

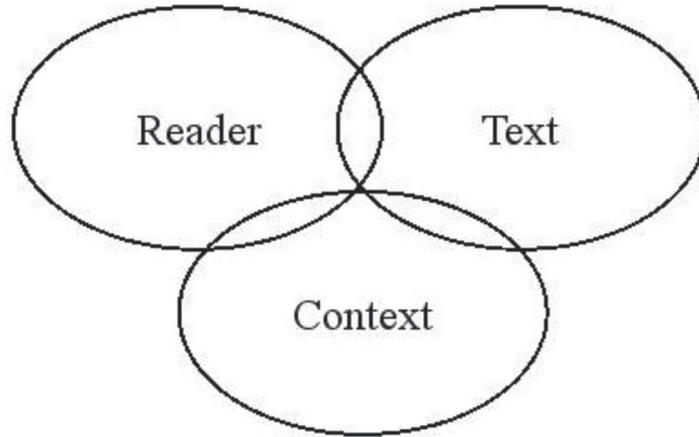


Table 1. Reading processes according to Irwin 1986:

Reading Processes				
Micro-processes	Integration procedure	Macro-processes	Word Recognition	Use of References
A	B	C	D	E
Word recognition Reading words in groups Micro choice	Use of references Use of cohesive ties Drawing conclusions based on existing-models	Recognition of main ideas Summary Use of the text structure	Predictions Intellectual visual reconstruction Emotional response Relation to prior knowledge Reflection	Detecting lack of understanding Compensating for lack of understanding

Having put the above methodological and pedagogical approaches into practice, we observe that the students eventually develop the following functional skills:

- Writing
- Grammar comprehension (with the correct understanding of language structures)
- Lexical comprehension (with the correct understanding of word formation)
- Ideographic understanding (with visual recognition that allows reading to be fast and meaning to be easily understood)
- Functional understanding (with the understanding of text structures and types of writing)

- Cultural understanding (with the recognition of the cultural meaning of words)
- Understanding of strategies and tactics
- Understanding of verbal expectations.

Clearly, reading is a complex task that can facilitate foreign language learning. It is an attractive learning technique which can motivate a student and spark his or her interest and it involves decoding unknown words, recognizing familiar words and identifying their patterns and relations so that the student can recognize the rest of the text elements and reach the desired goal of understanding written language. In order to achieve our goal of language comprehension, the readers can be trained to connect their prior knowledge to the new cognitive elements of the text.

The plot of a book is of primary importance and that is why a reader does not stop every time a difficulty arises since the ultimate goal is his or her general understanding of the plot. It turns out that the reader enriches his or her vocabulary naturally without even realizing it. However the new vocabulary the student learns needs further practice in order to be consolidated.

We must not forget that reading is an act of communication between the transmitter-instructor and the recipient-student (each of whom has their own strategies and their own goals) which presupposes that:

- the student already has a partial command of the language
- the student knows the basic text structures and written expression techniques
- the student recognizes the general cultural and scientific references
- the student is aware of the use of emotions in written texts.

Today a reader chooses to read a book if it contains new elements that he or she can discover and research during reading.

Of course a question that arises is to what extent learning a language through reading literature can bring positive results or the opposite. We must not forget our main goal which is to learn a foreign language and specifically the Greek language. In order to achieve this goal we need to carefully select the literary texts we will use taking into consideration our students' level and also their interests, since it is obvious that any reading audience – from school students to university students – have their own personal attitude to reading and learning in general. In other words, there are different types of readers. There are

- those who love reading books so much that they always read something and they sometimes read many books at once
- those who love reading but have certain preferences when they choose what to read and that is why we might say they are not such diligent readers
- those who do not love reading so much and are reluctant to read in general and they will only read books assigned by their teacher
- those who do not love reading at all, but this does not of course mean that they do not read anything, since in the age of the internet, consumerism and advertisements they are readers themselves without realizing it.

Taking into account the fact that there are different types of readers and

the fact that the choice of books must be determined by the study programme, always with the aim of learning Greek as a foreign language, a teacher needs to offer various reading activities and employ methods that enable both the students to learn and improve their language level and the teacher himself/herself to see the positive result of his or her work. With the right choice of texts even the most reluctant readers can become interested in literature since, after all, reading books on multiple levels can offer readers access to a world of knowledge and empower them to become autonomous in relation to literature reading.

In this way reading children's literature in Greek enables learners to use the Greek language naturally and spontaneously and gives them the opportunity to get used to a different way of thinking and communicating in Greek.

Therefore the aim of reading Greek children's literature is to provide teachers with a method of presenting, explaining, using and consolidating Greek language structures. It is actually a useful method for creating teaching strategies that allow for a systematic and gradual instruction appropriate to our students' age and level of proficiency.

In general, reading is an innovative use of language valuable both for the teacher and the student and it creates new emotional dimensions that facilitate intercultural communication and enrich a student's knowledge on many levels – phonetic, grammatical, semantic and cultural.

For the teachers reading, promoting and using this resource of children's literature opens the door to a different way of thinking that goes beyond the linguistic analysis and the teaching of a language, leading them to appreciate and make use of the variety and wealth of the Greek language.

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**APPENDIX**

1. *Entrer dans l'écrit avec la littérature de jeunesse*
2. <https://rfp.revues.org/558>
3. *Croyances populaires sur l'apprentissage précoce d'une langue étrangère*
4. <https://aile.revues.org/1298#tocto2n3>
5. *Les fonctions de la langue à l'école*
6. [https://www.ac-reunion.fr/fileadmin/ANNEXES-ACADEMIQUES/02-MISSIONS-ACADEMIQUES/mission-CASNAV/les\\_fonctions\\_de\\_la\\_LSco.pdf](https://www.ac-reunion.fr/fileadmin/ANNEXES-ACADEMIQUES/02-MISSIONS-ACADEMIQUES/mission-CASNAV/les_fonctions_de_la_LSco.pdf)

*Стаття надійшла до редакції 3.03.2018 р.*