ENHANCING ORAL COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS THROUGH INTERACTIVE READING ACTIVITIES

УДОСКОНАЛЕННЯ НАВИЧОК УСНОГО МОВЛЕННЯ ЧЕРЕЗ ІНТЕРАКТИВНІ ВПРАВИ НА ОСНОВІ ТЕКСТІВ

Ozminska I.D.,
Candidate of Philosophical Sciences,
Associate Professor at the Department
of Public Administration and Management
Ivano-Frankivsk National Technical
University of Oil and Gas

Despite rapid advancement of digital technologies, reading continues to play a vital role in developing communicative competence, and particularly oral communicative skills in foreign language learners. Strong communicative skills are integral to expressing ideas, interpreting situations and events, building relationships, engaging in meaningful exchanges. The purpose of the article is to examine the role of text-based materials in the development of oral communicative skills among foreign language learners, with a specific focus on how reading activities contribute to the enhancement of both fluency and accuracy. It is highlighted that integrating interactive reading activities helps learners improve their ability to express ideas clearly and coherently while using new vocabulary and correct grammar in context. The article outlines the requirements for text selection emphasizing learners' level of English, and specialization. Possible activities – small group discussions, mingling activities, role-playing, panel discussions, "character interviews" and board games – for both types of reading, intensive and extensive, are discussed. The value of extensive reading as a tool for expanding learners' vocabulary and providing ample material for discussions and activities is emphasized. It is underscored that although extensive reading is time-consuming for classroom instruction, it can be incorporated as part of self-study or through using flipped classroom approach, with in-class discussions to maximize its impact on oral communicative skills. It is highlighted that the decline in reading habits, particularly among modern learners, presents a significant barrier to achieving optimal results and is seen, along with often imbalanced use of vocabulary and grammar activities as a challenge that teachers face when integrating text-based activities. Unequal participation of students during group oral activities and effective assessment of oral activities need revisiting.

Key words: *oral communicative skills, ESP/ESL teaching and learning, interactive reading, extensive reading, text-based communicative activities.*

Незважаючи на швидкий розвиток цифрових технологій, навички читання займають важливе місце у розвитку комунікативних компетенцій, і особливо навичок усного мовлення. Сильні комунікативні навички є важливими для ефективного вираження ідей, вміння інтерпретувати ситуацій та подій, розвитку стосунків та участі в змістовних розмовах. Метою статті є дослідження ролі текстових матеріалів у розвитку усних комунікативних навичок у студентів, які вивчають іноземну мову, за допомогою інтерактивної вправи на читання. Підкреслюється, що інтеграція інтерактивних вправ створених на основі текстів допомагає студентам покращити їх здатність чітко та логічно висловлювати ідеї, використовуючи нову лексику та правильну граматику. У статті окреслено вимоги до вибору текстів з урахуванням рівня володіння англійською мовою та професійної орієнтації студентів. Подано можливі завдання для обох типів читання: інтенсивного та екстенсивного: обговорення в малих групах, завдання зі зміною партнера, рольові ігри, панельні дискусії, "інтерв'ю з персонажами" та інтерактивні настільні ігри. Підкреслено важливість екстенсивного читання як інструменту для розширення словникового запасу здобувачів та джерела ідей для організації обговорень і створення завдань викладачем. Зазначено, що хоча екстенсивне читання є затратним видом діяльності, його можна включити як частину самостійної роботи або використати підхід «перевернутого класу», з подальшими обговоренням прочитаного під час заняття. Підкреслюється, що зниження навичок читання, особливо серед сучасних учнів, є перешкодою для досягнення оптимальних результатів. Нерівномірна участь студентів під час групової діяльності та особливості оцінювання усної діяльності потребують подальшого розгляду.

Ключові слова: *усні комунікативні навички, викладання англійської мови професійного спрямування/як другої іноземної, інтерактивне читання, екстенсивне читання, комунікативні завдання.*

The problem statement. With the rapid development of digital and AI technologies, the landscape of language learning is undergoing significant transformation, but the importance of reading methods in developing learners' oral communicative skills remains crucial, offering a time-tested approach to improving fluency, vocabulary expansion, and critical thinking. As such, the ability to communicate effectively is becoming vital in the today's interconnected world – well-developed communicative skills help learners to overcome language barriers, adapt to varied linguistic and cultural challenges and confidently participate in both social and professional activities. Consequently, communicative competence is a central focus in foreign language teaching and learning programmes.

Communication, which was once ranked among the top skills for employability, has shifted in priority in 2025, giving way to digital fluency, data literacy, creativity, emotional intelligence, critical thinking, adaptability and resilience [9]. Despite this shift, it is clear that without well-developed communicative competence in a foreign language it will be challenging to acquire and effectively use the above listed skills. Moreover, as noted in [12], the rise of digital and AI technologies has transformed the way we operate,

but strong communicative skills still remain crucial for "strengthening relationships and promoting collaboration and adaptability". They help foster creativity, critical thinking and cooperation.

When discussing communicative skills, it is important to recognize that it is not only about speaking ability; effective communicative skills include other abilities like active listening, awareness of communication style and tone, accuracy, clarity and fluency [12]. It is necessary to emphasize that communicative skills are not acquired passively – by merely consuming the language, but rather through purposeful and interactive engagement with it. In other words, to develop these skills, educators must select and implement strategies that provide learners with opportunities to use language in authentic and meaningful contexts. Among these strategies, using texts, where learners work collaboratively to decode and discuss content, serves as a powerful vehicle for developing both accuracy (through attention to form) and fluency (through sustained spoken interaction), while also fostering strategic awareness (through negotiation of meaning and cultural interpretation).

Analysis of recent research and publications. The review of available literature shows a substantial body of research devoted to the development of communicative skills in the context of foreign language teaching and learning. The concept "communicative skills" is rooted in the notion of "communicative competence", a term introduced by D. Hymes in 1972 to demonstrate that effective communication depends not on linguistic competence solely but on a broader set of skills, abilities, and knowledge [16]. These sets of skills were later expanded in the outstanding work by Canale & Swain, who distinguished four dimensions of communicative competence [3; 16]: grammatical competence (phonology, vocabulary, grammar rules and sentence formation); discourse competence (cohesion and the ability to connect sentences using discourse markers to form meaningful utterances); sociolinguistic competence (rules for interaction and knowledge of sociocultural aspects of language and discourse); and strategic competence (verbal or non-verbal communication strategies that are to help overcome or eliminate communication breakdowns that appear as a result of insufficient knowledge or performance variables [17] (hesitations, pauses or false starts, etc.). This competence was later revisited by L. Bachman, who emphasized its role as means of compensating in learners' linguistic knowledge gaps.

Over time, the strategies for developing language skills were discussed by prominent foreign researchers such as H.D. Brown, S. Campbell & F. Rubio, R. Ellis, J. Hammer S. Krashen, J. Lee & B. Vanpatten, P. Nation, J. Richards & T. Rodgers, and others.

In the Ukrainian academic sphere, the formation of communicative competence of higher education students has been examined by such scholars as I. Chebotarova theoretical approach to communicative competence); I.S. Mezhuieva, who treats communicative competence as a criterion for assessing knowledge; K.V. Krylova, who conceptualizes it as a pedagogical category; A. Zinoruk; V. Pavlov [4], who investigates the development of communicative competences through traditional methodologies in combination with digital elements; and Ya. Shvedova [5], who explores learners' communicative skills and abilities from a competency-based perspective.

The importance of developing higher-education students' skills in reading authentic, professionally oriented texts had been researched by Y.O. Manzhos, who views reading as a primary means of obtaining information in professional and official activities. L.V. Bohynia & S.A. Skalska have shared their experience of teaching reading skills to foreign students in Ukraine. Shevchenko has explored the use of digital platforms and tools, along with role-playing, to support these goals. Theoretical issues surrounding the teaching of text-based oral communication, along with their practical applications, were discussed by S. Ryzhkova and O. Yarema.

On the whole, a substantial body of scholarly work, both within Ukraine and internationally, addresses the formation of foreign-language communicative abilities in higher-education learners. However, the methodology for integrating textual materials into the teaching process in order to fully develop students' oral communicative potential remains insufficiently studied.

The **purpose** of the article is to explore the role of reading in developing oral communicative skills in foreign language learners through interactive reading activities.

Results and Discussion. Reading has long been recognized as a powerful tool for developing communicative skills due to its multifaceted nature, which addresses various aspects of language learning and communication [13; 14; 18]. Since texts provide rich, authentic contexts, they allow learners not only to gain necessary or specific information but also to learn about linguistic structures, cultural narratives, and pragmatic uses of language – aspects that make textual material an invaluable for enhancing both verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication. In this process, interactive reading serves both as a source of linguistic input and foundation for active, learner-centered learning that enables active participation and communication. In this regard, text becomes a basis around which the teacher organizes classroom tasks and activities.

It is worth noting that although the term "interactive reading" is primarily used to describe the process of acquiring reading skills by children, where a parent mediates between the reader and the text to helps the former interact with the text [7], this approach can be adapted for adult language learners. Similarly, in

the process of foreign language teaching and learning, the educator selects level-appropriate and professionally oriented texts to incorporate activities and tasks that are aimed at stimulating communicative performance, particularly – spoken output from the learner.

Scholars generally divide reading instruction into four types, depending on the specific objective of the lesson [1; 8]: *overview or skimming* (this type of reading is aimed at general comprehension of the text); *search reading or scanning* (used to find specific details or information in the given textual material. Tasks for developing scanning skills include finding names, dates, descriptions, and other specific data; true/false tasks); *intensive or active reading* (a detailed and focused reading which requires close, detailed work on shorter texts where learners focus on vocabulary, grammar, discourse markers, and textual organization. Teachers guide students through pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading tasks [1; 8], which are controlled by the teacher); *extensive reading* (reading for fun and entertainment, where the learner's primary goal is to understand the plot or main ideas without translating every word. It encourages students to read freely and without interruption, promoting fluency and engagement with the text).

Some researchers argue that intensive and extensive readings are types of reading while scanning, skimming, and silent reading represent different approaches to learning strategies and text comprehension [10]. It has been observed that intensive reading is more commonly used in foreign language teaching, as it typically involves shorter, usually specialized texts about certain professional or academic aspects. This type of reading allows presenting domain-specific vocabulary and language structures within limited classroom time. At the same time, extensive reading exposes students to a wider range of vocabulary and syntactic structures, however it is often too time-consuming to be fully integrated into class sessions. As a result, it is more appropriate to incorporate extensive reading as part of a self-study or flipped classroom activity, followed by in-class discussions.

Nevertheless, in the ESP/EFL context, different types and strategies of reading can be of value as long as they have the potential to enhance oral communication. A review of contemporary English language teaching approaches reveals that prioritizing the mastery of only grammar structures or vocabulary, or even both, is insufficient for developing oral communicative competence. Learners must also develop an awareness of the appropriate contexts, and situations in which to use the language along with grammar rules. As Manzhos states, one of the key pedagogical functions of the text is its ability to develop oral proficiency and expand vocabulary [2].

Therefore, the selected text must provide rich, discussable content that naturally prompts learners to speak.

To ensure that such materials effectively contribute to oral skills development and to maximize their pedagogical potential, they must be thoughtfully integrated into classroom activities. This involves designing tasks that transition learners from comprehension to active use of language in spoken contexts. In practice, the teacher should first selects or adapts a text – be it a newspaper article, short story, dialogue, or informational brochure – that meets both learners' interests, needs and learning objectives. This text then becomes the anchor for a series of tasks designed to move students from comprehension to production.

According to Ryzhkova [14], the teacher must consider three interrelated requirements when selecting texts for the ESL/ESP classroom, namely:

1) the texts/reading materials must align with learners' communicative and cognitive needs – texts should resonate with students' interests and real-life, be these academic, professional, or personal purposes because learners are more motivated and engaged into the activity when they perceive a text as relevant to their lives. Moreover, cognitively stimulating materials – such as problem-solving narratives or data-rich articles – encourage learners to use higher-order thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation), which in turn leads to deeper language processing [18];

2) the texts must be of adequate linguistic complexity. The complexity of a text must reflect learners' existing language experience in both their first and target languages. If a text is too simple, it fails to stretch learners' abilities and yields little progress; if it is too advanced, it risks frustration and demotivation [13]. This requirement corresponds to Krashen's input theory;

3) the text must prioritize meaningful content over showcasing isolated linguistic forms. The primary function of a text is to convey information, ideas, stories, arguments, and not to present isolated vocabulary or grammar points. When learners read a text to understand its main ideas, they naturally absorb vocabulary and grammar along the way because their focus on meaning allows the language features to "slip in" without conscious effort [6].

Similar requirements to the selection of text are given by S. Krashen [13], who argues that language acquisition happens when we understand the meaning and the message of the utterance. His theory suggests that to build oral communication proficiency, it is important to read interesting, compelling books, "so interesting that the reader forgets that they are reading in a foreign language". An essential part of this theory is that 1) reading material must be adapted to the learners' needs and proficiency level or it is

recommended to use special graded readers for low-level learners; 2) learners should be exposed to texts that are a little more difficult than their current level, but neither too challenging, otherwise they may cause frustration and discouragement, nor too simple, otherwise learners will not make progress. However, S. Krashen's theory is criticised for focusing almost exclusively on comprehension and paying little attention to the explicit teaching of grammar and vocabulary or to opportunities for learners to produce language themselves [18], that is there is input, but no little spoken output. It is important to consider an additional requirement to text selection in the context of higher education: the text should align with the syllabus and educational programme, and cover specialized professional topics, relevant to learners' future careers.

It is common knowledge that reading for educational purposes is a three-step process which involves pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading stages. Each of the stage presupposes certain activities that target specific language aspects: vocabulary expansion, grammar practice or discourse development [14]. As this article focuses on oral communicative skills, we will not delve deep into these types of activities, but instead outline those that specifically contribute to enhancing students' oral communicative skills. Thus, we will examine activities that can be incorporated at different stages of reading.

At the *pre-reading stage*, depending on the text complexity, it is recommended to introduce the topic of the text, stimulate motivation and activate learners' prior knowledge by brainstorming ideas or encouraging students to predict the content of the text based on the title, key vocabulary, or any other visual aids accompanying the text. These will help learners to relate personally to the content. This can be effectively done using a pair-think-share mode, where students first think individually, then share their thoughts with a partner before discussing them as a class.

Oral communication can also be practiced during the *while-reading* stage. The communicative activities at this stage can be predicting possible events, jigsaw reading and interpreting, taking roles of characters and acting out dialogues, clarifying concepts or language structures, or timed questions-and-answers sessions. This stage can be effectively used for annotating, mapping and highlighting key ideas or completing graphic organizers that can later serve as a basis for arranging oral answers.

The *post-reading stage* is one of the most productive phases for developing oral communicative skills. It provides ample opportunities for students to reflect on the text, express their personal opinions, and engage in deeper analysis. It also allows for developing critical and analytical thinking, and using the language in more creative, interactive, and communicative ways and can be used after both intensive and extensive reading. In terms of activities, this stage is one of the most prolific offering interactive activities that can be incorporated into the lesson. Here are several practical examples that show how interactive reading activities can be used to enhance oral speaking skills:

– *small mingling group discussions* (students work in groups of three or four. Each group is assigned a text-related problem or situation and is asked to discuss how to resolve a conflict between characters or come up with an alternative solution to a problem posed in the text. Then, they mingle with members from other groups and share their solutions in new groups);

– *Socratic debates* (students work in small groups and are tasked with brainstorming ideas on ethical dilemmas, or controversial themes from the text. Each group must think of both sides of an issue, arguments for and potential counterarguments. Afterwards, they are assigned specific positions to defend, regardless of their personal opinions and try to prove their point);

– *role plays and penal discussions* (students are signed different roles from the text – a character, narrator, or civil servant or representative of authority, and discuss the issues or themes from the text from their assigned roles). This can be structured as a Q&A session where the class asks panelists questions about the text;

– *retelling or description* (students work in pairs: one describes a subject such as a character, scene, or activity while the other listens attentively and takes notes. The describer should mention as much detail as possible, using descriptive language and accurate vocabulary. Afterward, the 'writer' retells the description, adding any missing details. The description is then passed to another pair, who add further details if possible and check it for accuracy. To make the activity more engaging, students can use AI to generate an image based on the description and then discuss the similarities/differences.

Another effective method is to gamify the discussion by designing a text-related board game. The board game can feature questions, quotations, challenges, or scenarios derived from the novel. The game design can be modified to incorporate language structures, vocabulary, or even cultural references found in the text, further enhancing learners language skills (see the link).

It is particularly beneficial to encourage students to create their own questions related to the text, rather than providing them with teacher-designed questions. This will make learners more attentive and responsible readers as they must engage critically with the text, and will deepen their comprehension and enhance their ability to express ideas clearly and coherently.

Teachers face a range of challenges when using reading as a tool to develop oral communication

skills. One of the most significant challenges is motivating students to engage with reading activities. Despite reading being considered a powerful means of improving oral communication and a correlation between reading and learners' active speaking vocabularies (those who do more reading have higher achievement in both first and second language [11], there is a decline in reading habits among modern learners, who often prefer interactive, multimedia-based content over traditional reading, which can lead to reduced motivation and interest in more substantial reading. Furthermore, in oral activities performed in groups, some students may dominate the conversation, while others may remain passive or reluctant to speak, or they may get off the topic and switch to their native language [15]. This unequal participation can prevent all learners from developing their oral skills.

Conclusions. Interactive reading suggests interaction with the text and among students or with a teacher, which engenders communication. The integration of reading into oral communicative activities, whether through extensive or intensive reading, provides students with rich, authentic linguistic input that not only broadens their vocabulary and grammar but also fosters fluency, creativity, critical thinking, and interpersonal communication. When students discuss or interact in some way with the texts they have read through debates, summaries, role-plays, dramatized retellings, or group discussions, etc., they not only reinforce comprehension but also develop the ability to articulate complex ideas coherently and confidently.

Further research should be conducted into the issues of assessment, particularly regarding the evaluation of oral activities performed in small groups and the possibilities of using AI for developing communicative skills through reading without replacing human interaction.

REFERENCES:

1. Богиня Л.В., Скальська С.А., Трусова Л.В. Навчання читання як виду мовленнєвої діяльності іноземних студентів на підготовчому відділенні. *Актуальні проблеми сучасної вищої медичної освіти в Україні.* 2019. С. 24-25. URL: https://repository.pdmu.edu.ua/server/api/core/bitstreams/f728c8af-d1ce-4e96-b7ff-d191e695ff22/content

2. Манжос Е.О.. Розвиток навичок читання професійно-орієнтованих текстів у процесі навчання іноземними мовами. *Вища освіта у контексті інтеграції до європейського освітнього простору.* 2018. С. 260-268. URL: https://osvita.eeipsy.org/index.php/eeip/article/download/144/141

3. Межуєва І. Ю. Комунікативна компетенція як основний критерій оцінки якості іноземної мовної освіти студентів-перекладачів. Вчені записки ТНУ імені В. І. Вернадського 2022. Том 33 (72). № 1. С. 92-96. URL: https://doi.org/10.32838/2710-4656/2022.1-2/15

4. Павлов В. О. Методика викладання англійської мови в юридичних зво: інновації та досвід класичного підходу навчання. *Часопис Київського університету права.* 2024. Вип. 4. С. 27-33. URL: https://doi.org/10.36695/ 2219-5521.4.2024.2

5. Шведова Я. Формування комунікативних вмінь здобувачів вищої освіти в процесі вивчення міжфакультетської дисципліни «покоління Х, У, Z та виклики сучасності». *Наукові записки кафедри педагогіки.* 2021. Вип. 48. С. 71-82. URL: https://doi.org/10.26565/2074-8167-2021-48-09

6. Bamford J., Day R. Extensive reading activities for teaching language. Cambridge University Press, 2004. URL: https://assets.cambridge.org/052101/ 6517/sample/0521016517ws.pdf

7. Cherry N. Interactive reading – More than just reading a book. EEF blog. 2023. URL: https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/eef-blog-interactive-reading-more-than-just-reading-a-book

8. Ferk Y. Types of Reading: Scanning, Skimming, Extensive and Intensive reading. TEFL-TESOL Certification. URL: https://tefl-tesol-certification.com/ blog/types-of-reading

9. Future-Proof Your Career: The Top 10 Skills Employers are Looking for in 2025. St John's University. 2025. URL: https://www.stjohns.edu/news-media/johnnies-blog/top-skills-employers-are-looking-for-2025

10. Harun R., Wang H., Jahirul I. Discuss the Different Types of Reading Techniques and Develop Its Skills. *Journal of English Language and Literature.* 2021. Vol. 8. P. 36-40. URL: https://joell.in/vol-8issue-3-2021/

11. Ismailli T. The importance of reading in developing speaking skills. *Scientific Research International Online Scientific Journal.* 2024. Vol. 4. Issue 6. P. 9-13 URL: https://doi.org/10.36719/2789-6919/34/9-13

12. Joubert Sh. Communication Skills That Will Advance Your Career. Northeastern University blog. URL: https://graduate.northeastern.edu/knowledge-hub/corporate-communication-skills/

13. Krashen S. Language Acquisition. The Brainwaves Video Anthology. YouTube. 14 Dec. 2022. URL: https://youtu.be/pVLnGf2VW0M

14. Ryzhkova S. The peculiarities of using texts in teaching of practice of oral and written speaking for the developmnent of communicative skills of students. Наукові записки БДПУ. 2021. Вип. 2. С. 281-289. URL: https://doi.org/10.31494/ 2412-9208-2021-1-2-281-287

15. The benefits of speaking English only. Langport Blog. 2021. URL: https://www.langports.com/the-benefits-of-speaking-english-only/

16. Vorweg C. Communicative Competence: Linguistic Aspects. International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences. 2nd Ed. 2015. P. 294-301. URL: https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-097086-8.53042-6

17. Zhao C. Theorizing the Language Ability and Language Assessment. US-China Foreign Language. 2023, Vol. 21 (7). P. 261-266. URL: https://doi:10.17265/1539-8080/2023.07.002

18. Zielazny A. What is Comprehensible Input in language learning. Stephen Krashen's theory. *Taalhammer.* 2023. URL: https://www.taalhammer.com/what-is-comprehensible-input-in-language-learning-stephen-krashens-theory/#htoc-lack-of-evidence-on-adult-acquisition