

A PROBE INTO THE TEACHING COMPREHENDED READING TO STUDENTS IN RUSSIA OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE XIX CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates how the leading figures of reform in Russia in the 60-70s of the XIX century turn to the method of teaching reading as one of the main educational skills. The authors prove that scientists have developed a method of teaching comprehended reading to students of different classes, ages, and levels of knowledge. They expanded access to the paper word. They presented the disadvantages of the traditional classical education system and suggested an alternative—an applied learning system. The important finding found that the controversy contributed to the appeal of teachers to develop a new, explanatory method of teaching reading, which undoubtedly accelerated the process of forming the method of comprehended reading.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Russian education reform the second half of the XIX century was democratic in nature. People's lives acutely need for change in all areas, the previous inefficiency education system. There is a tendency to reduce differences in literacy skills between classes and to criticize previous conditions, actions, and traditionalist views. Methods of teaching reading are the main learning skills after leaving the initial stage of training becomes a natural decision for managers of reforms in Russia at that time. Teachers and social activists wanted serious changes in the ways of teaching meaningful reading to students of different ages, the content and volume of reading literature, and the reorganization of educational institutions. It was achieved in a short time (60-70 years XIX).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This problem was widely discussed in the works of F. I. Buslaev (1982) and Ostrogorsky (1873), which characterize the first method of teaching comprehended reading – the explanatory method. These scientists named the method for the first time in the XIX century gave it a theoretical and practical justification in their works.

The research of P. I. Milyukov (1903) examines the historical background, L. S. Vygotsky (2008) psychological and pedagogical, A. E. Kaufman (2011), P. F. Kapterev (1995) - socio-cultural reasons for changes in the management of comprehended readers in Russia in the XIX century. Today, these studies are equally important for understanding the ways of modern pedagogy.

The works of N. I. Pirogov (2018), L. I. Polivanov (1868), I. I. Sreznevsky (1860), and V. Ya. Stoyunin (1860) reveals the features of teaching reading in classical and applied learning systems in the 60-70s of the XIX century.

Among modern researchers, it is necessary to note the works of V. F. Chertov (2013) (consciousness of both teachers and students in the selection of literature for reading). V. V. Zelchenko not only speaks a lot about the modern teaching of ancient, "classical" languages but also draws the attention of the modern public to the historical development of comprehended teaching of "classical" literature.

3. METHOD

This work is based on a cultural-historical approach, consideration of pedagogical facts and phenomena in specific historical conditions, taking into account the economic, cultural, and political level of development of society. The hermeneutical approach to the study of socio-pedagogical processes involves the interpretation of the semantic content of sources. Axiological and humanistic approaches allow us to consider the personality of the student and teacher in matters of education and upbringing as the highest value of social development.

4. TEACHING COMPREHENDED READING

Teaching comprehended reading is a separate issue in the education of schoolchildren, it is closely related to the reorganization of high schools. The new type of educational institution was approved in 1864. The role of the native language, national history, natural science, and modern literature increases significantly in them. It splits the teaching community into two camps – «applied» and «classics» – for a long time.

4.1 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL METHOD OF TEACHING

The historical and cultural method of teaching determines the training in a classical gymnasium, «in which the introduction to civilization is given greater importance compared to grammatical and logical training» (Zelchenko, 2019). There was intending in the opinion of its adherents to develop thinking, and not to communicate various information that was characterized as too diverse and prone to variability. They revealed Aristotle's «Poetics» as «a code of laws of art that must be followed, for genius must be perfected, and the path to perfection is the imitation of classical models, exercise, and reading». It was required to «more often contain students in rhetorical exercises and imitations of the best authors, both Latin and Russian», for example, «Lomonosov's speeches and sermons, published again from the Synod» (Chertov, 2013). The

significance of such education is in the constant appeal to the best examples of world experience contained in antiquity, which was considered the basis of all cultures – both European and Russian. Exercise in subjects that do not tolerate negligent treatment, was traditionally attributed to the advantages of classical education. Moreover, only classicism, as repeatedly emphasized by supporters of classical education, made youth immune to indoctrination, since it developed a critical mind and freed them from such «superfluous», «free-thinking» subjects as, for example, civics. According to P. N. Milyukov, in the 50s it was claimed that the youth did not know the current legislation was fond of «Republican institutions of the classical world», from which the conclusion was made that «classicism» is to the detriment of the student, classical languages should be replaced by the study of law (Milyukov, 1896-1903).

4.2 CLASSICAL EDUCATION

«Classicists» allowed themselves harsh statements that an applied school could only «prepare students not for people with moral convictions, but for lifeless folding stores, more or less filled with a load of various kinds of knowledge» (Milyukov, 1896-1903).

Moreover, all foreign teachers who sent their comments about the proposed reform were their supporters.

The main objections to classical education were its isolation from real life, of scholasticism and the strangeness of the national peculiarities and traditions. The psychologists supported opponents of the former system: «Completely abstract thinking proceeds for the student in an incomprehensible way, which gave rise to a naked and dry verbalism in our former school, i.e., an endless predilection for verbal formulations, for verbal definitions without any insight into the essence of the matter». The students understood entire essence of the previous system of education (in the figurative expression of L. S. Vygotsky) clearly as a horse understands which way to turn when the reins are jerked, but the meaning of the path as a whole from the starting point to the endpoint, the essence of these turns remained inaccessible (Vygotsky, 2008).

An adept of the classical gymnasium, F. F. Zelinsky, an antiquarian, culturologist, public figure, one of the most famous professors – «classics», said at one of the congresses: «perhaps the mistake of the old school was precisely that they tried too hard to bring various local needs to the same denominator... perhaps the future school will better meet its purpose when it provides proper scope for various needs of local nature and differently gifted psychologically teachers» (Zelchenko, 2019).

4.3 ROLE OF TEACHERS

V. Ya. Stoyunin (1860) spoke about the greater importance of the role of the teacher, the ability to make «your own method» in teaching in contrast to the harmony and prescription of the system. He insisted that "there can be no strict systematic presentation, it is only necessary to strictly understand what before and after you need to explain to the student, to lead him more accurately to the goal» (Stoyunin, 1860). Stoyunin (1860) argued «the inappropriateness of the power of a dead language and scholastic ideas» and cited the authoritative opinion of Professor Sreznevsky. However, he was not inclined to the opposite point of view. «On the one hand, the habits of the old and the innovations of modern writers, on the other-explanations or just rules without any explanation, repeated in textbooks, led... to such discord that only our habitual will do, knows how to put up with it to everyone's satisfaction» (Stoyunin, 1860).

N. I. Pirogov opposed the division into classical and applied high schools, saw secondary schools as General education, giving the basics of knowledge in all subjects. He admitted that he still preferred classical education. Also, he was against the possibility of choosing lessons categorically. «Can a 12-or 13-year-old child enter the fourth grade of a gymnasium be given a choice of teaching that has such a significant impact on his future career? Is he able to appreciate the measure and quality of his mental abilities, his inclinations, the importance of the significance of this or that scientific subject?. True, he is not alone, but his parents also participate in this choice; but parents, often completely uneducated, having in mind only the worldly benefits of their son's future career, of course, choose what they think is more profitable; and the young man, having the opportunity to choose, stops at what seems easier for him» (Pirogov, 2018). That is why Pirogov advised us to look for good teachers (for parents), to prepare good teachers (for universities and lyceums). «Believe me, in the hands of a competent teacher, both ancient and new languages, and all subjects of universal education will not remain without benefits for the development of mental abilities" (Pirogov, 2018). Pirogov (2018) called for literature lessons «to oblige teachers to engage more practically with students (reading and analyzing classical writers, literary conversations, etc.), which is not consistent with the direction of mentors, although generally zealous, but used to literally adhere to programs" (Pirogov, 2018).

5. RESULT

Figure 1 presents the principal theoretical positions of classical and applied teaching systems in Russia in the 60-70s of the XIX century.

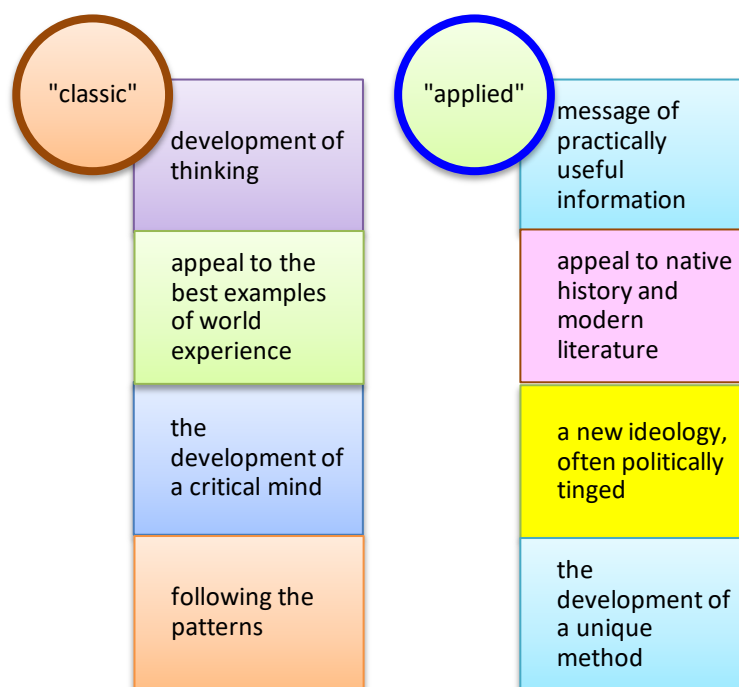


Figure 1: Theoretical positions of classical and applied teaching systems.

L. I. Polivanov (1968) tried to reconcile the «classics» and «applied», and wrote an article «in defense of literary works as a subject of study in secondary schools». He explained that the study of literary works was introduced in high schools instead of the theory of syllables, prose, and poetry, as well as the history of literature, and was perceived as a change in the method of teaching. The literary critic recognized that with the new approach, the student learned to look at the work as

an example or source of information. «A literary work will rightfully become an important means of development and will form in the student a literate person in the strict sense of the word» when he learns to understand what he has read (Polivanov, 1868). L. I. Polivanov insisted on searching for General laws of analysis and requirements for the work that is introduced into training. The work of the teacher must be determined by these laws (1) by what the student does not see in the work, and (2) by what the work itself does not give for its full understanding. It is a glorification of the explanatory method of reading.

5.1 ESTABLISHMENT OF TEACHING METHOD

F. I. Buslaev (1882) established this method first, as known. His work «On the teaching of the national language" (1844) contained an expressive assessment of the old school system, which he considered « criminal code of laws, a police calculation of rules, for non-compliance with which the guilty is punished» (Buslaev, 1882). The order of presentation of modern textbooks contradicted the «natural development of the gift of speech», the scientist stated categorically: children are completely useless any theoretical information before they learn to write and understand what they read «clearly».

K. D. Ushinsky (1870), V. Ya. Stoyunin (1860), V. p. Ostrogorsky (1873), V. I. Vodovozov asserted the extreme importance of studying the native word in all aspects; they are the followers of F. I. Buslaev (1882). Read what is available to age, what is written in modern language, what corresponds to life experience, stop to explain the incomprehensible, convey the essence of what you read in your own words, learn to Express what you read in writing – these are the first principles of teaching reading, which, according to these teachers, should be followed from the first days at school, forming the skill of interested, «conscious» (Ostrogorsky, 1873), «real», «labor» (Stoyunin, 1860), «practical» (Vodovozov, 1888), «productive" (Kulman, 1892) reading (all these are variants of the explanatory reading). In the middle section, however, the main focus in the management of reading was the education of «higher ideals» by means of literature, which is impossible to implement without »real« reading. That is why it was necessary to study works of art with «a pronounced educational orientation, full of ideas embodied in an aesthetically impressive form» (Stoyunin, 1860). Theoretical skills are acquired in high school.

The main method of work in the lesson when teaching conscious reading is an analytical conversation. First, it eliminated the strict normativity of classical rhetoric, and secondly, it promoted «labor», conscious study of literature at school (Stoyunin, 1860).

5.2 READING AND READING

The method of «real study» of the text in school from V. I. Vodovozov (1888) already assumed a comparative historical analysis. This revealed the distinctive features of the era, the influence of the author's personality, his biography on the content, and the social significance of the topics. V. P. Ostrogorsky (1873) spoke about the «ethical and aesthetic» education of students utilizing artistic words, in which the work was carried out with a «spiritual mood», addressed «to everything sublime, noble, good. Such work taught the student «to treat correctly and intelligently both the phenomena of life itself and the works of literature, in which he will know what to look for and what to hold on to». (Ostrogorsky, 1873). The teacher also believed that literary education is impossible without independent reading, which is why he paid great attention to the organization of extracurricular reading.

The teacher was convinced that samples of literary words cannot provide a single, once and for all approved conclusion, it is impossible to allow the student (as well as the teacher) «anatomical knife cut into pieces the works of such geniuses as Shakespeare, Schiller, Goethe, our Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol» (Ostrogorsky, 1873). Learning to read in the middle level, according to V. P. Ostrogorsky (1873) not rejects the classical theory at all, but must begin with comprehension of the theoretical contents of the initial psychology and the laws of creation, realized in aesthetic and historical analysis of Russian and many foreign works. Only then is it possible to «gradually build a great building of literary education in the soul of a young man» (Ostrogorsky, 1873).

5.3 PRINCIPLES OF EXPLANATORY READING

The basic principles of the classical reading method are presented in Figure 2. Even on the pages of artworks, you can notice echoes of the dispute between «classics» and «applied». For example, in the play «For every wise man enough simplicity» by A. N. Ostrovsky in 1868.

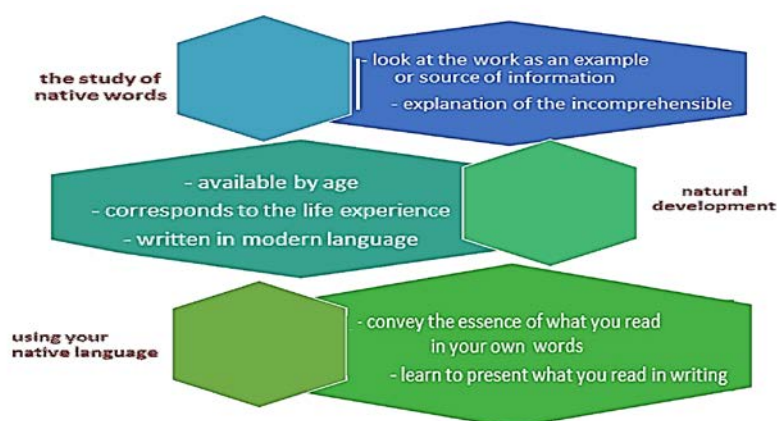


Figure 2: Principles of explanatory reading.

The memoirs of the Russian journalist A. E. Kaufman (2011) give a speech by D. I. Mendeleev: «... stop stuffing the heads of young men with classical trash and mental straw, and give them healthy real technical knowledge! And then Russia, in the depths of which inexhaustible riches lie untouched, will bloom with a magnificent color... » To this, according to the memoirist, they objected that his classical education did not prevent him from becoming a great chemist (Kaufman, 2011).

5.4 EDUCATION REFORM: A PROGRESS

They considered the new Charter a victory for classical education in 1871 «In spite of the history of our school and the pedagogical truth». P. F. Kapterev (1995) explained this victory by the effectiveness of the political weapon into which they turned the pedagogical reform: political well-intentioned, lack of freedom of thought, and therefore an obstacle to the spread of education among the people. «The desire to plant and strengthen a trustworthy political mood in the youth-the reason has long been and still decides our pedagogical issues» (Kapterev, 1995).

I. I. Sreznevsky (2017) assessed the consequences of such a reform and described the results of the exams. Their lack of freedom in the presentation of ideas and useless knowledge of the dead amazed them. (Sreznevsky, 2017).

V. P. Ostrogorsky (1873) described the typical graduate schools in 1873: theoretical concepts and critical erudition – no, «the mental development is so poor that he has neither desire nor the energy to read a critical article, on the part of acquaintance with world literature complete ignorance, and sometimes superficial, flippant attitude down to the greatest works of the human

spirit», «poor, fragmented knowledge, poor reading in relation to Russian literature». The teacher lamented that you «almost do not meet the desire and ability to read a serious book in our youth», and concluded that the graduates were distinguished by «the poverty of taste development, which was little affected by the teaching of literature» (Ostrogorsky, 1873).

However, the high school student should not blame for this state of affairs, according to V. P. Ostrogorsky. First, the literature course itself is built incorrectly. Secondly, neither the school nor society can instill an interest in reading: «In the 40s when we had no other literary interests, and our students read and were interested in works of literature; now when all the interests of society are reduced to all sorts of legal and other scandals or to ... profitable, bread operations and issues of the day, when society almost reads nothing, the spirit of utilitarianism ... easy money and emptiness of mind and hearts penetrate the schools» (Ostrogorsky, 1873). Finally, the third reason for the unsatisfactory state of reading instruction is related to the poverty and randomness of the composition of libraries. Thus, society receives graduates who are not prepared for serious reading and have neither the desire nor the ability to supplement their education with this important component.

6. CONCLUSION

The results of the review of the development of comprehended reading training for middle school students in Russia in the 60-70s, this study gives key aspects. This study identifies the direction of educational reform towards the democratization of education of the country's population. The liberal sentiments of the participants in the reform, with the government, approval, allowed us to openly present the shortcomings of the traditional classical education system and offer it an alternative both in organizational, theoretical, and practical terms. Traditionalists-classics did not give up their positions without a fight, and the resulting controversy contributed to the appeal of teachers to develop methods of teaching conscious reading, which, no doubt, accelerated the process of forming the methodology.

The authors of the article structured the key features of the "classical" and "applied" methods of teaching reading. They demonstrated how the controversy between the representatives of the two camps gave birth to the awareness of a new teaching method - teaching comprehended reading. The structure of explanatory reading, which was formed in the 60-70 years of the XIX century, is also presented for the first time. The authors consider this method to be the beginning of the modern system of teaching comprehended reading.

7. AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIAL

Data can be made available by contacting the corresponding authors.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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