

Linguodidactic Principles Of Developing Semantic Reading Skills In Foreign Language Teaching

Dadamirzayeva Barnokhon Otamirza kizi

Doctoral student of Namangan State University, Uzbekistan

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Abstract: This article explores the linguodidactic principles essential for developing semantic reading skills in foreign language teaching. Semantic reading is viewed as an active cognitive process in which learners construct meaning through linguistic knowledge, prior experience, and psychological mechanisms. Using a multilayered methodology grounded in Pavlov's two-signal theory, Kintsch's comprehension model, and CEFR guidelines, the study identifies key principles such as authenticity, graduality, cognitive activation, and integrativeness. Findings show that effective semantic reading requires balanced bottom-up and top-down processing, purposeful strategy instruction, and the selection of meaningful, level-appropriate texts. The study concludes that semantic reading enhances not only comprehension but also critical thinking, emphasizing the need for further research on digital tools that support deeper semantic processing.

Keywords: Semantic reading; linguodidactics; cognitive processes; reading strategies; foreign language teaching; CEFR; comprehension skills.

Introduction: Reading comprehension has long been regarded as a key component of foreign language acquisition, serving not only as a means of accessing information but also as a cognitive linguistic process in which meaning is constructed through

Semantic reading is not a modern invention. Its philosophical roots can be traced back to Plato and Aristotle, who emphasize the relationship between thought and understanding. As Adler notes in his book *How to read a book*, semantic interpretation is grounded in "a unity of grammatical and logical analysis" (Adler, 1972). Therefore semantic reading is better understood as an integrative cognitive activity in which the reader constructs meaning through a dynamic interplay of linguistic knowledge, prior experience and psychological processing.

Modern linguodidactics also views reading not as passive perception but as an active problem-solving process (Kintsch, 2005). Especially in foreign language teaching, learners treat text like cognitive puzzles requiring prediction, inference, structural analysis and semantic interpretation.

METHODS

The study shows a multi-layered methodology which is

designed to systematically analyzing the linguodidactics foundation of semantic reading. The methodology integrates theoretical, psychological and pedagogical perspective to ensure a comprehensive understanding of phenomenon. A comparative review of traditional and modern linguodidactic principles was conducted to evaluate:

- The shift from mechanical reading to semantic and interpretative reading techniques.
- The integration of cognitive psychology into foreign language pedagogy.
- Differences between analytical and synthetic approaches to reading (Hoshimov & Yo'qonov, 2003; Grabe & Stoller, 2019).

This allowed for the identification of core principles necessary for effective semantic reading instruction, such as authenticity, graduality, cognitive activation, and integrativeness.

Pavlov's theory of the two-signal system (1951) and modern cognitive models (Kintsch, 2005; Van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983) were used to interpret the psychological mechanisms involved in semantic reading.

The psycholinguistic analysis focused on:

- Perception and decoding processes during

first-signal activation;

- Meaning construction, inferencing, and semantic integration during second-signal activation;
- Predictive processing (anticipation) and schema activation (Rumelhart, 1980).

Through this lens, semantic reading was framed as a multi-step, cognitively demanding process. The final methodological stage involved synthesizing pedagogical strategies recommended by both local and international scholars (Rajput et al., 2008; CEFR, 2020).

This involved:

- Mapping reading strategies (skimming, scanning, intensive/extensive reading, inferencing, summarizing) to different stages of comprehension.
- Identifying environmental, motivational, and linguistic conditions that influence reading efficiency.
- Reviewing classroom-based methods such as:
 1. Pre-reading activation tasks,
 2. Während-reading monitoring strategies,
 3. Post-reading semantic integration tasks.

The synthesis allowed for the formulation of pedagogical recommendations relevant to the development of semantic reading competence.

RESULTS

Psychological literature emphasizes the presence of two signal systems in humans. The first signal system responds to direct sensory stimuli, while the second signal system is activated by verbal stimuli (Pavlov, 1951). Based on this principle:

- Initial reading (“tanishuv”) corresponds to first-signal perception: rapid decoding and surface comprehension.
- Deep comprehension corresponds to second-signal processing: interpretation, abstraction, and semantic integration.

This confirms Adler’s claim that reading is a “psychological game of imagination” in which thought and language interact [Adler, 1972:2].

Factors Influencing Reading Efficiency

Reading effectiveness depends on several interrelated factors:

1. Reading environment – proper lighting, minimal distractions, and comfortable conditions enhance comprehension.
2. Reading speed – both excessively fast and overly slow reading negatively affect understanding (Grabe & Stoller, 2019).
3. Age and cognitive development of the learner.

4. Interest and motivation toward the text (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000).

5. Familiarity with linguistic material (lexical, grammatical, phonetic).

6. Anticipation skills, or the ability to predict upcoming content (Kintsch, 2005).

7. Text length appropriate to the learner's level.

8. Terminological density and subject familiarity.

Analytical and Synthetic Reading Approaches

- Analytical reading – detailed examination of vocabulary, expressions, structures, and complex paragraphs.
- Synthetic reading – grasping main ideas without detailed analysis.

Both approaches complement each other: analytical reading deepens comprehension, while synthetic reading develops fluency and global understanding.

DISCUSSION

The expanded findings underscore that semantic reading is a complex, multi-component process grounded in linguistic, cognitive, and pedagogical foundations. The discussion interprets these findings in light of broader theoretical and practical implications.

The results highlight a significant alignment between psychological theories of learning and linguodidactic approaches to reading. Pavlov’s two-signal model confirms that reading is not merely visual decoding but a high-order cognitive activity driven by verbal reasoning. This finding resonates with Kintsch’s Construction-Integration model (2005), which posits that comprehension requires continuous interaction between text-based information and the reader’s prior knowledge. Thus, semantic reading instruction should activate both:

- bottom-up processes (decoding, vocabulary recognition),
- top-down processes (prediction, inferencing, schema use),

The study reinforces that text characteristics (complexity, authenticity, relevance, terminological density) directly influence comprehension outcomes. CEFR guidelines (2020) emphasize text authenticity as essential for developing real-life communicative competence. Similarly, Grabe and Stoller (2019) argue that texts must engage the learner cognitively and emotionally to stimulate deeper semantic processing. Therefore, semantic reading requires not just any text, but pedagogically curated texts that align with:

- learners’ age and cognitive abilities,
- linguistic readiness,

- motivational interests,
- professional or academic goals.

The findings confirm Bredikhina's (2018) assertion that reading strategies must be taught intentionally rather than assumed to develop naturally. Strategy instruction enhances learners' ability to:

- predict content through anticipatory skills,
- distinguish essential from non-essential information,
- infer implied meanings,

This aligns with Guthrie & Wigfield's (2000) argument that motivated engagement drives deeper comprehension.

4. Analytical vs. Synthetic Reading as Complementary Processes

While some scholars distinguish analytical and synthetic reading as separate methods, the study suggests they function best when used in complementary fashion:

- Analytical reading deepens understanding of linguistic forms and structures;
- Synthetic reading supports fluency and global comprehension.

Together, they create a balanced approach that reflects real-world reading processes. This duality also parallels intensive vs. extensive reading frameworks in foreign language education. The study confirms that comprehension is not purely cognitive but also depends on:

- the quality of the reading environment (lighting, noise, comfort),
- emotional readiness,
- learner interest in the topic,
- access to background knowledge.

The results suggest several pedagogical implications:

- Teachers should create an environment that supports both cognitive and emotional readiness for reading.
- Reading instruction should include pre-reading tasks (schema activation), while-reading tasks (monitoring), and post-reading tasks (interpretation and synthesis).
- Digital tools, such as adaptive e-reading platforms, may enhance semantic comprehension by providing interactive glossaries, visual supports, and instant feedback

Ultimately, developing semantic reading competence contributes not only to language proficiency but also to critical thinking and analytical skills, making it a key

component of modern language education.

CONCLUSION

Semantic reading plays a crucial role in foreign language acquisition, enabling learners to interpret, synthesize, and evaluate textual information. Its development requires:

- an understanding of psychological mechanisms (two-signal theory),
- linguodidactic principles (authenticity, motivation, graduality, integration), and
- pedagogical strategies (analytical and synthetic reading).

The study highlights that creating an effective semantic reading environment improves comprehension, enhances cognitive engagement, and fosters critical thinking. Future research should explore digital tools, adaptive reading systems, and multimodal texts that further enhance semantic processing.

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