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Teaching Reading in Blended Learning in the Framework of
Applied Linguistics
MASTER'S THESIS

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ABSTRACT

The topic of the Master's thesis is "Teaching Reading in Blended Learning in the Framework of Applied Linguistics".

This study aims at focusing on how to develop reading skills of students with intermediate level of English by blending face-to-face and online activities. Blended learning is a technology which combines face-to-face and online activities based on the possibilities of the digital technologies for making the learning process more efficient.

The paper deals with recent research concerning the topic of teaching reading in blended learning. Research material is extracted from reliable sources such as books and scientific journals. Blended learning concepts, conceptualizations, main principles, advantages and disadvantages, and key reading principles are described.

Our observations are based on a questionnaire we designed to understand whether students like to read or not and how, what and why they read.

The model of the process of university students reading skills' development is created and implemented into the educational process.

The results of the experimental work are analyzed and graphically presented.

The results of the experimental work reveal the effectiveness of the model designed.

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INTRODUCTION

Society is going through a lot of changes now such as digitization, computerization, corona virus, emergence of many gadgets and keeping in mind that the old teaching methods are not suitable now, considering the changes that are taking place in the learning process, blended learning looks very relevant. Blended learning is an approach to learning which mixes classroom and online activities.

How to teach reading is one of the important and actual issues, because very often we receive information is through printed or in an electronic format texts. We conducted a survey (a zero cut at the starting stage of the experiment), the aim of which was to reveal whether students liked to read, how much they read and so on (see the questionnaire in Appendix 1) in which 70 students of 1-3 years of study participated (55 boys and 15 girls of different high schools and institutes of the South Ural State University, the mean age was 19,6). 56 students (80 percent) say that they like reading, 14 students (20 percent) do not. In spite of the fact that students like reading, only 13 of them (18,6 percent) read every day; 21 (30 percent) – some days a week; 14 (20 percent) – some days a month; 7 (10 percent) – once a month; 15 (21,4 percent) – less than once a month. While reading students spend different amount of time (from less than 15 minutes – 4 respondents to more than 2 hours – 8 people, or even more than 3 hours – 5 respondents; 17 respondents – more than 1 hour; 21 students – 30-60 minutes; 15 students – 15-30 minutes). It means that students do not like to read continuously for a long time. 39 students (55,7 percent) practice reading through paper books and e-books, it means, that teaching reading would be better in blended learning environment. Most students (33 respondents – 47 percent) read for their studies only, also, sometimes they read the news, fiction and science fiction. Only 20 students (28,6 percent) say that everything is interesting for them to read. Most students (49-70 percent) do not consider reading as their favorite hobby, also, only 14 (20 percent) participants like to spend free time reading. Only 20 students (28,6 percent) read books in foreign languages; but

68 people believe that the ability of reading in foreign languages is very useful to make progress in the language and learn something new.

So, we see that reading is important for students. But to read only paper books is not a suitable variant as people have a lot of gadgets and we should take it into consideration while planning the learning process.

The subject is the complex of exercises to teach reading in blended learning.

The object is the process of teaching students reading in blended learning.

The aim is to develop students' reading skills by combining classroom and online activities.

The research gap is that there is no unique model of teaching reading in a blended teaching approach, therefore, the gap is to create such a model that could be successfully used in teaching English.

The objectives of the research are:

1. To identify the theoretical background for the research.
2. To collect the material.
3. To establish the methodology.
4. To organize the experiment.
5. To describe the received data that would include the analysis of the peculiarities of teaching reading in blended learning.

The research materials are articles published in the international scientific journals, books, online resources, connected with blended learning, reading skills, teaching reading, of 1967-2022.

The theoretical sources of our study are the works of such researches as Banados E., Barrett B., Bonk C., Bower M., Garrison D., Gruba P., Hinkelman D., Kanuka H., Giarla A., Graham C., Dreon O., Zacharis and others.

The theoretical value of the research is that it can be taken as a basis for teaching reading and understanding what blended learning is, and the use of blended learning as a method of teaching reading and as support in the development of learners' ability to read effectively.

The practical value of the research is that the model, the complex of texts and exercises related to them, and the online course may be used in developing reading skills.

Structure and volume of the research. The thesis has of **81** pages, an introduction, a theoretical chapter in which the theoretical aspects of education terminology and a model are discussed, and a practical chapter in which we describe and analyse the process of teaching reading in a blended learning format, and show the findings of the paper using graphs as well as some tables. There are **46** references representing articles, books, and online resources, and **2** appendices.

CHAPTER I THE THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF TEACHING READING IN BLENDED LEARNING

1.1 Blended Learning

1.1.1 Blended Learning Concepts

The term “Blended learning” was originally used in corporate training describing teaching approaches which included coaching, online interaction and internship. In relation to higher education, this term arose from the desire to find a golden mean between face-to-face and distance learning (Gruba, Hinkelman, 2011). As for English language teaching (ELT) it became commonplace at the dawn of the 21st century with the publication of Sharma and Barrett’s “Blended learning” (Sharma, Barrett, 2007).

The blended learning theory was developed in detail by C. Bonk and C. Graham (Bonk, Graham, 2012). Blended learning reflects the process of merging the archetypes of two learning environments: traditional and distributed. The rapid spread of the distributed environment occurs due to the expansion of the possibilities of distributed communication and interaction.

The term “Blended learning” is difficult to define because this phenomenon is multifaceted and context dependent (Kerres, de Witt, 2003; Oliver, Trigwell, 2005).

It is defined as a blend of learning methodologies that includes various teaching modalities, most often eLearning and conventional face-to-face learning (Giarla, 2022).

Garrison and Kanuka define blended learning as a mixture of classroom and online activities, so, the main components of blended learning are activities in the class and online (2004).

Graham understands blended learning as a mixture computer-assisted instruction and face-to-face activities (2006). Based on blending he identifies three

groups: generative, transformative and facilitative blended learning. They help choose appropriate learning methods, enhance traditional teaching using online learning, without fundamentally transforming the teaching approach. Online and classroom activities will be fully integrated in the transformational mixing, such as the real change from learning with online learning. It should not only make efficient use of the abundant online learning resources and powerful and convenient interactive functions of the Web, but also give full play to the leading role of teachers in guiding, inspiring and monitoring the learning procedure in order to accomplish the aim of cultivating students' ability of autonomous learning, inquiry learning and collaborative learning.

A blended learning environment is composed of multimedia technology, network technology, mobile learning technology and traditional media technology which help students interact and have learning support. Blended learning is more effective than simple traditional classroom and remote learning online (Porter et al., 2014; Al-Qahtani & Higgins, 2013; Köse, 2010).

Graham and Watson state that learning that is blended or hybrid is now used frequently (Graham 2009; Watson 2008).

Blended learning sometimes is referred to “mixed or hybrid learning” (Stracke, 2010, p. 57), “b-learning” (Banados, 2006, p. 534), and “e-learning” (Shepard, 2005).

Due to some researchers blended and hybrid learning are related to the same notion (Olapiriyakul and Scher, 2006).

Some researchers distinguish between the following concepts using percentages (Smith and Kurthen, 2007):

- web-enhanced (the minimal online activity – announcements, course syllabus);
- blended (online activity replaces less than 45 per cent of face-to-face classes);
- hybrid (up to 80 per cent of learning materials are conducted online);
- fully online (more than 80 per cent of materials are carried out online).

Blended and hybrid learning can be understood as synonyms or alternative forms of education. If they are understood as alternative forms that means that in blended learning online and offline formats alternate; as for hybrid learning these formats are implemented in parallel, for example, some students during the lesson are in the classroom and some other are online.

In the higher education it is defined as “a combination of technology and classroom instruction in a flexible approach to learning that recognises the benefits of delivering some training and assessment online but also uses other modes to make up a complete training programme which can improve learning outcomes and/or save costs” (Banados, 2006, p. 534).

Blended learning can be seen as ***an approach*** (a strategic and systematic approach to combining time and methods of learning, using face-to-face and online interaction with the help of IT), ***method*** (combination of classroom and online learning), and ***technology*** (the educational process organization which is based on the combination of technologies of the traditional learning system and e-learning, which means the conjunction of online education with classroom and autonomous using the possibilities of modern digital technologies).

So, paying attention to existing definitions in our paper we will understand blended learning as ***a technology which combines face-to-face and online activities based on the possibilities of the digital technologies for making the learning process more efficient.***

1.1.2 Blended Learning Conceptualizations

The Inclusive Conceptualization

Inclusive conceptualization aims at viewing blended learning as a whole. The most common forms of blended learning are combining delivery media, instructional methods, and online and classroom instruction (Graham, 2006). All these forms are quite broad and can be applied to practically all learning systems. Driscoll thinks that blended learning has an untapped potential (2002) as it is seen

differently. Oliver and Trigwell doubt that there is any ambiguity in understanding the idea of blended learning (2005). Different learning management systems (LMS) are being used by many institutions and schools now. It might be debated if such circumstances should be seen as blended learning, or whether they have become the standard of education nowadays.

The Quality Conceptualization

The quality conceptualization aims at improving the quality, positive effects and the benefits from classroom and online activities in combination. Garrison and Kanuka contrasts integrated learning from improved classroom or entirely online learning experiences, albeit they acknowledged that the distinctions are not evident (Garrison and Kanuka, 2004). Blended learning is very complex, as different blended learning designs are not identical. The main effective way of combining online and classroom activities is that they should complement each other. Also, some researchers think that blended learning can facilitate and support the learning process as classroom activities are usually time-limited (Zacharis, 2015). Flipped classroom technology also may be used to provide more time for discussion and group activities in the classroom (Tan and Hew, 2016).

The Quantity Conceptualization

Speaking about the quantity conceptualization Allen and Seaman (2010) note that a large proportion of the content is usually delivered online, using online discussions, and reducing time for face-to-face interactions.

Bernard et al. (2014), Porter et al. (2014) suggest that 50% of time should be given to online activities. One model suggests the use of 25% of the total course time for online learning (Diep et al., 2017). A traditional class can be transformed into a blended one by reducing time for classroom activities (Zacharis, 2015). Also, there is an example when a course time was divided into equal parts for learning in a computer laboratory, in a synchronous way on the Internet, and by means of asynchronous Internet communication (Bicen et al., 2014).

The Synchronous Conceptualization

This type of conceptualization means that teachers and remote students communicate face-to-face via video and web conferencing in real time (Bower et al., 2015). Different technologies are used to support student interaction, collaboration and discussion, as well as problem solving (Bower et al., 2014). These technologies can differ in complexity ranging from Skype on iPads and laptops (Cunningham, 2014) to using physical and virtual worlds for collaborative learning (Bower et al., 2017).

The Digital Classroom Conceptualization

This conceptualization involves using online technologies during classroom activities. Tablet computers and earphones can be used for this aim (Smith and Suzuki, 2015) as well as online and hardcopy materials (Cakir and Bichelmeyer, 2016).

Other Conceptualizations

Oliver and Trigwell (2005) think about the possibility of blended learning implementation to any two or more things that can be mixed, e.g., online and classroom activities, e-learning and traditional learning, mixed pedagogics, objectives, etc. Because of a great number of interpretations practically anything can be understood as blended learning.

Thoughtful integration of different teaching methods (Alammery et al., 2014), online learning asynchronously and synchronously (Diep et al., 2017), access to an online course content, a teacher's feedback via online tools can be regarded as blended learning, too.

1.1.3 Main Principles of Blended Learning

Dreon (2013) suggested the following principles of blended learning:

- **Encourage communication between students and teachers.** It is necessary to students to know how to contact their online instructors and should be encouraged to communicate with them when needed. In online courses, multiple means of contacting the instructor (email, Skype, , etc) and clearly post times when he / she will be available to chat during online office hours should be identified. While few students utilize the online office hours the teacher provides, offering this time communicates to students that the teacher is available if they need assistance and that he / she values this interaction.

- **Develop cooperation among students.** For those of teachers who believe that people learn through socially constructing their understanding based on their experiences, this principle is critical. Online courses should not be independent study classes. Online instructors need to build collaborative structures into their courses to promote students' interaction. Those students who feel isolated in an online course have difficulty being successful. It is necessary to incorporate collaborative and interactive ventures early on, and try to foster discussions where students communicate with one another, share ideas, and debate concepts. While interacting with the instructor is important in an online class, it is vital that students have a space where they can discuss concepts with one another, as well.

- **Encourage active learning.** Learning is not a passive activity. For students to learn, they must be actively engaged with the content in thoughtful, purposeful ways. Developing online course, it is necessary to think of the ways of building active learning into the course content. This can include utilizing tools with a course management system (discussions, for instance), or hands-on lab activities developed with common everyday items, or even conducting observational work at a park or at the mall.

- **Give prompt feedback.** This can be tricky, especially with instructors teaching larger online classes. While grading hundreds of papers can be overwhelming, students need to receive prompt feedback to know whether they are being successful or what they should improve. Some automated responses can be

built into online courses, but many students still need and want personalized feedback on their work that comes directly from their instructor.

- **Emphasize time on task.** Learning takes time. Although an online course may be more flexible schedule-wise it also require a significant time commitment. It's important for instructors to communicate expected time commitments but also be realistic with their expectations. Assigning students to read a 500 page book in a day may not be completely realistic. It is necessary to have high expectations but respect students' need to have time to interact with the content and learn.

- **Communicate high expectations.** While it is crucial to have high expectations for students, it is also critical that these expectations are clearly communicated to students. Likewise, it is helpful to communicate clear expectations for participation and for interaction. These are some areas that online instructors need to consider as they develop an online course such logging the students on daily, submitting assignments in a certain format, using emoticons in their discussion posts, and others.

- **Respect diverse ways of learning and talents.** Students learn in a variety of ways. While there will undoubtedly be some text-based content in an online course, it cannot be the only mode of delivery or assessment. It is useful to draw on the host of multimedia options available online to deliver content to students and to assess them. Instead of assigning a long-page paper, students may be asked to create a video where they demonstrate what they've learned.

1.1.4 Advantages and Disadvantages of Blended Learning

Let us examine some benefits of blended learning. The main advantage for students is that it is student centered (Figure 1).

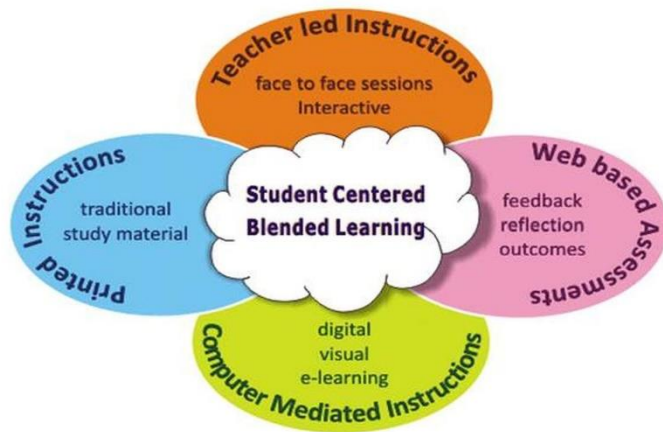


Figure 1. Student Centered Blended Learning

The following advantages can be taken into consideration.

- Teaching is more affordable, less expensive to deliver and saves time.
- It is very flexible. Students can access materials, instruction and support from any place in the world and at the most convenient time for them.
- Students can access resources and materials of their appropriate level and interests.
- It can reduce stress of learners who are slow or quick and increase retention of the information and satisfaction.
- Chat rooms, discussion boards and emails help students interact with their instructors effectively.
- The improvement of learning and teaching quality.
- Feedback on students' works are quicker.
- There are more opportunities for collaboration.
- Improved time efficiency.
- Increased students' interest in learning – students are more interested in the disciplines with the technology integration into them.
- Technologies help keep students concentrate on studies longer than paper resources.

- Learner autonomy is provided – the higher the autonomy, the greater students' responsibility for their process of learning and its results is.

- Students' academic performance and passing rates, as well as, their satisfaction and the teaching efficiency are improved (Lopezperez et al., 2011; Garrison & Vaughan, 2013).

Despite the obvious advantages, blended learning has a number of disadvantages.

- It is strongly dependent on the technical devices (modern personal computers, tablets and laptops, and software).

- An insufficient IT competence and literacy can be a barrier for teachers and students in using the possibilities of digital technologies successfully.

- Effective feedback is more time-consuming for teachers and also more expensive.

- Instable Internet connection can cause problems for both teachers and students.

1.1.5 The Role of a Teacher as an Online Learning Facilitator

The online presence of a teacher is crucial to students during their online experience. This is a teaching role adapted for online learning and it unites all the skills of teaching and implicates the teacher in a new role that matches the paradigm shifts. Laurillard (2002) has suggested a conversational framework can be used to engage students online, based on Vygotsky's ideas of a proximal development zone. This theory maintains that students learn most effectively when they are guided rather than directed. It is a form of facilitated learning where talking, in this case through online discussions, and questions from the student to the academic and vice versa promote new ideas to be built or constructed from existing knowledge. There can be the following activities:

- Narrative – teacher's conceptions are made accessible to students and vice versa.

- Interactive – the teacher provides feedback to students based upon the outcomes of tasks students undertake.
- Adaptive – the teacher uses the information to revise and if necessary changes the focus of the dialogue.
- Communicative – the teacher supports processes where students discuss and reflect upon their learning.
- Productive – the student and teacher agree on learning goals and task goals which can be achieved using media forms suitable for online learning an environment. (Laurillard, 2002, p. 90)

1.2 Reading

1.2.1 Reading as a Receptive Skill

Speaking about reading we can say that it is the process of simultaneous reception of a printed text, recognition of lexical-grammatical material in its communicative interrelation, understanding the integral content and meaning of the utterance by way of creating an object-image – the content of a text.

There exist different definitions of reading.

In general sense reading is getting meaning from printed or written symbols.

Urquhart & Weir said that reading means tackling with written or printed messages (1998, p. 14).

Smith clarifies that reading is a thought expressed in a written text (2004, p. 27).

Reading is an activity that involves thought and perception. Two interrelated processes are at work – *word recognition* (perceiving the correspondence of written symbols to the spoken language) and *comprehension* (understanding words, sentences, a text). To understand a written text readers take advantage of vocabulary, background knowledge, and grammar.

Reading has the following main functions:

- receiving information contained in a text (= inner/silent reading) – is correlated with listening comprehension;
- transmitting the information extracted from the text to the listeners (= reading aloud) – is correlated with speaking.

There exist several reading purposes:

- reading for survival (serves immediate needs or wishes; a means of finding out information on a strictly utilitarian basis; involves immediate response to a situation);
- reading for learning (serves the wider role of extending our general knowledge of the world – much day-to-day reading; also goal orientated);
- reading for pleasure (is done for its own sake).

1.2.2 Key Reading Skills

It is required to develop the following key reading skills for the reading to be productive:

- **Making predictions from a text type.** Different text types (such as essays, articles and blogs) have different characteristics. Some will be suitable for academic study than others. Before reading a text, a reader can make predictions about the information and the style of the writing. The source, title and any pictures can help predict the content.

- **Making inferences from a text.** Sometimes, writers suggest the meaning of something without saying it directly. Being able to read this inferred meaning (as well as the exact meaning of the words) is a useful skill. It is important and useful to practice using reasoning, logic and your knowledge of the world to work out the real meaning behind the words you read.

- **Skimming for key words.** Many texts may have unknown words, especially if these texts are about specialist subjects. A reader could prepare himself for reading by skimming the title and introduction paragraph for any unknown words. It is necessary to try to decide from the context whether these words are important

to understand or not. If they are, a reader can try to guess their meaning or check them in a dictionary.

- **Previewing.** Before reading a text on a particular topic, it can be useful to think about a reader's own knowledge and views on this topic. This will help develop a greater interest in the text and make it easier to understand.

- **Activating prior knowledge.** Before reading a text, it helps to think of what a reader already knows about its subject. This will help understand a difficult text because a reader will know what information to expect. It is also useful to think of some questions that a reader hope the text will answer. This will help him / her to focus on the important information. When the text has been read, a reader can make notes about what he / she has learnt. By approaching reading in this way, a reader can find out what he /she wants or needs to know about the subject.

- **Identifying cohesive devices (pronouns and synonyms).** Good academic writing flows easily and is not too repetitive. The writer needs to show links between ideas, but tries to avoid repeating the same words. Using pronouns and synonyms in the place of nouns and noun phrases can help. To read well in English, you should identify what these pronouns and synonyms refer to.

- **Skimming.** Skimming is reading a text quickly in order to get a general idea of its main points. It is particularly useful when a reader has a great deal of information to read in a short space of time, or when it is not necessary to understand a text in detail. Readers often skim read a text to find out if it is useful or not before reading it more thoroughly. It includes: looking at the title, any subheadings and illustrations – they often give clues about the content; reading the introduction, conclusion and opening sentence of each paragraph.

- **Working out the meaning of key words from context.** The process of reading will be very slow and boring if the reader tries to find all unknown words in a dictionary. An alternative strategy is to try to speculate the meaning from the context. To do this with an unknown word, the reader should look at the words before and after it, and also look for clues to the meaning.

- **Scanning to find information.** Scanning is used to look for specific information in a text. If a reader knows what information he / she wants from a text, it is no need to read it all. It is useful to just move eyes quickly down the page looking for the key words in the information a reader wants.

1.2.3 Reading Perspectives

Speaking about perspectives, it we can name two of them. The first one, that treats reading as a receptive, as well as a passive process, is the traditional perspective. The second one deals with reading as an interactive method. Modern perspective is based on the psycholinguistic theory of reading, (Goodman , 1967; Smith,1971). The role of the text in this perspective is to assert or deny expectations; it assumes that the reader can develop expectations depending on his former experience and knowledge. Reading is not just receiving some information from the text, it is about the way of reading which expands the new information provided by the text.

1.3 Teaching Reading

There are some reading principles which are necessary to know while teaching reading.

Principle 1: Encourage students to read, the more they read, the better.

Principle 2: Get students involved in what they read.

Principle 3: Encourage students to discuss the topic and the content of the text, thus provoking personal engagement.

Principle 4: Consider prediction as a major factor in reading.

Principle 5: Match the task and the topic, choosing the right level of difficulty and appropriate activities.

Principle 6: Bring text to life.

1.3.1 Teaching Reading in the Classroom

Paying attention to that moment that teach reading will take place not only in the classroom but using information technologies as well, in this paragraph we are giving activities which we can be appropriate to be used in a classroom.

First of all, these are exercises connected with pronunciation. It is reasonable to practice them in class for the teacher to listen to each student and correct the mistakes.

While teaching reading a teacher should pay attention how to teach reading aloud and silent reading.

Teaching **reading aloud** has three steps:

- the phonic way (the knowledge of sounds and their association with corresponding letters are provided);
- the word way (presentation of a complete word);
- the sentence way (sentences are units of approach).

Only the combination of all these methods can provide good reading.

To teach reading a system of exercises is widely used. It includes:

- *grapheme-phonemic exercises*;
- *structural-information exercises*;
- *semantic-communicative exercises*.

Grapheme-phonemic exercises are intended to foster the understudy capacity to connect the graphic images with the phonic ones.

The process of teaching reading is better to start with the grapheme presentation of the letter. For this purpose, a teacher can use flashcards or just write it on the blackboard. Using flashcards, the teacher:

- presents a new letter or several ones;
- asks students to compose a word (it is necessary to use several cards at once, e.g., the letters *a*, *t*, *c* compose the word *cat*);

- checks how students know and remember graphemes or letters;
- requests students to say as many words as they know which begin with a necessary letter;
- asks students to compare letters and sounds showing the appropriate letters for given sounds.

While teaching reading, a set of flashcards can be used or the teacher can write letters on the board. The main purpose of such activity is to recollect the previously orally learnt words and to see how letters can compose them.

The same methods are used to teach students how to read words. But the task is different:

- from given words choose only those ones which cannot be read according to the given rule;
- find a letter due to which the words are different.

Structural-information exercises are used to read sentences, paragraphs, texts correctly. When students still cannot read sentences properly (usually at the beginning of teaching reading), a teacher reads them himself first. Sometimes it is necessary to read each sentence or a passage several times to be sure that students understand it. Then, students repeat sentences after a teacher. A group work is also useful when students read to each other, so each student has an opportunity to read and to listen to other members of the group. Students can also correct each other. After that a teacher can listen to some students how they read.

Reading in chorus is a good method but the time given to it should gradually be decreased when students begin to read better independently. A teacher should not eliminate this type of activity because students can come across new and difficult words and to read them properly they need a teacher's help.

Students can start reading by themselves when they can associate sounds with written symbols. So, they show how they know reading rules and manifest their ability to read to the teacher.

When we teach **silent reading** we can come across two problems: 1) students should know some grammar and vocabulary to perform a grammatical and lexical analysis in order to find some new information in sentences; 2) it is connected with developing students' ability of language and meaning apprehension (the so-called language guessing).

The first problem is easy-going if students know how to recognize the logical predicate in a sentence. First students read the text silently and try to find the words which help convey the new information. Students should pay attention to the position of these words in the text. Some signals may be helpful in this respect (the Passive Voice, the indefinite, impersonal structures, etc.). Such grammar and vocabulary analysis is very helpful for students to comprehend structural words, understand the meaning of unknown words; some words can be even familiar but do not conform the structure of the sentence.

Structural-information exercises help students to choose certain information from the text. They can be the following:

- to read the sentences and try to figure out the meaning of unknown words;
- to read sentences and analyze the grammar use;
- to find the logical predicates with the help of given words;
- to determine the words in the text which convey new information;
- to break complicated sentences into shorter ones;
- fill in the gaps.

Semantic-communicative exercises are used for instructing students how to receive the needed communicative message from the text. These exercises are connected with silent reading and may have such communicative activities as answering the questions, finding required words describing something, proving something, and other.

These types of exercises are used in a different way which depends on the stage of teaching. At the junior stage, it is necessary to use more grapheme-phonemic

and structural-information exercises. At the following stages structural-information exercises and semantic-communicative activities are mostly used. The main role is given to semantic-communicative exercises at the senior stage.

While working with a text it should be born in mind that not any text is suitable for students. Text selection should be very careful. Authentic texts are texts that have not been written specifically for language learners but are intended for any competent user of the language. The success of the reading activity often depends on the complexity of the text the students working with. Moreover, the amount of difficult and unknown language may make the texts impenetrable for students and lead to other problems at lower levels. It is important to strike a balance between students' abilities and interests and real English.

For beginner students, some original written materials can be understood to some extent, such as lists, timetables, signs, basic instructions. Whereas in longer prose, texts are adapted and written specifically for the level of students. It is important to know that these texts as closely resemble the real English language as possible.

Students can be engaged in working with high-level material when they have a teacher and other students' support, as opposed to when they read on their own. How students can handle reading material depends on whether the texts are designed for intensive or extensive reading.

The reason lower-level students are encouraged to use simplified or graduated reading devices for intensive reading is to avoid reading delays by students. If we want students to read for fun, we have to make sure that they don't try to use material that is too difficult. Therefore readers are graded as they use appropriate language for each different level. Therefore, students can enjoy reading books even when there is no teacher to help them.

The following are some criteria which are important while selecting material for reading.

The text should:

- be a vehicle for teaching specific language structure and vocabulary;

- offer the opportunity to promote key reading strategies (highlighting; annotating the text; reading aloud; graphic organizers – maps, diagrams; having questions to think about while reading; explore the text; act out the text; summarizing; inferring);
- be a vehicle for teaching specific language structure and vocabulary;
- offer the opportunity to promote key reading strategies (highlighting; annotating the text; reading aloud; graphic organizers – maps, diagrams; having questions to think about while reading; explore the text; act out the text; summarizing; inferring).

It is not sufficient only to find a suitable text to teach reading. A set of exercises should be given for better understanding. Text-related tasks can fall into three main groups: *pre-reading activities* (to activate the previous knowledge), *while-reading activities* (to develop such strategies as understanding the meaning, finding specific information, understanding coherence and cohesion), and *post-reading activities* (to check understanding). The following activities can be used while working with a text.

Pre-reading activities

- Discuss the type of the text.
- Make predictions about the content of the text due to its title, subtitle(s), pictures.
- Read the topic sentences below. Work with a partner and discuss what you think the rest of each paragraph will be about.
- Complete the table (the diagram) using words from the box and explain your choice.
- Look at the statements below. Do you think they are true or false? Discuss with a partner.
- Look at the photograph and discuss the questions with a partner.
- Describe the pictures (photographs).

While-reading activities

- Read the text and check your predictions. Find examples to support your ideas.
- Explain your choice in choosing appropriate words or phrases.
- Complete the sentences below with your own words. Write between four and eight words for each sentence.
- Correct the sentences below.

Post-reading activities

- Work with a partner. Answer and discuss the questions below.
- Work with a partner. Decide whether the statements below are true or false or there is no information in the text.
- Complete the sentences below with your own ideas.

So, in the classroom it is better to spend time on pronunciation of difficult words, collaborative activities and discussion related to the text.

1.3.2 Teaching Reading Online

Exercises which can be performed online are usually done at home. That is why they should be presented in suitable forms, for students to understand how to do them. Usually, such exercises are in the form of tests. Students can work through such exercises and comprehension at their own pace.

LMS Moodle has opportunities for creating different types of tests (quizzes): of all-or-nothing multiple choice, dragging and dropping into text or onto image, matching, of multiple choice, giving a short answer, etc. Such exercises are assessed by the computer, which saves a teacher's time.

The following exercises can be performed online:

Pre-reading activities

- Match the words to the correct definitions.
- Match collocations to their meanings.
- Complete the sentences using the words from the box.
- Match the sentence halves.
- Match the headings to the examples.

While-reading activities

- Match informal words and phrases to formal words. Use the context to help you.
- Tick the correct parts of the table.
- Choose whether the statements below are true, false or the article does not say about it.
- Number the statements in the order they are discussed in the text.
- Choose the best answer for each question.
- Match the descriptions to the correct pictures.
- Choose the subjects that are discussed in the text.

Post-reading activities

- Choose the statement that best matches the author's opinion.
- Match the statements to the correct explanations.
- Choose the correct word to complete the sentence.

1.4 A Model of Teaching Reading in Blended Learning

Our research shows that only specially organized activities can provide the process of developing reading skills and make it stable and effective.

The methodological framework of the research includes the studies of researches on the problems of teaching reading in blended learning. Building models in the field of education involves the implementation of the following

stages: 1) the choice of theoretical and methodological bases that determine the initial positions of the study of the pedagogical phenomenon; 2) substantiation of the internal structure and content of the pedagogical model being developed; 3) identification of its implementation basic principles in the real educational process of the university.

To determine the internal content of any pedagogical model it is necessary to determine its methodological basis. In science these are theoretical and methodological approaches. The multidimensional nature of the issue of teaching reading in a blended learning format requires integrative consideration, which is based on a complex of mutually complementary approaches. In our research they are *systematic, complex and personality-oriented approaches*.

Systematic approach is used as the major research approach to establish the factors that affect pedagogical system management, discover unity and integrity of all interacting components and subsystems, their connection with the mechanism, methods, tools, and principles of management in education. It allows us to see that the pedagogical process is an integrity with interconnected structural components obeyed the general law of a system organizational structure and functioning. Realization of this approach promotes sequence, logicity, harmony and, finally, effectiveness of the system of teaching reading in blended learning.

The basic concept that the implementation of this approach is directly connected with is the concept of “system”.

A pedagogical system can be defined as a collection of interrelated means, methods and processes necessary for the establishment of an organized, purposeful pedagogical influence on personality formation with given qualities.

A pedagogical system is a social system with some specific (educational, didactic, developing) goals, control and feedback. Every society has a goal of forming a personality, that is why a pedagogical system should exist according to this goal. If the goal changes, the system should also be changed.

All pedagogical systems are artificial, developing, open and social, real, and dynamic. Their elements are students, purpose of training and education, content of

education and training, educational or didactic process, technical means of teaching or learning, and organizational forms of training and education.

Pedagogical systems have the following features: interconnections between the elements, the elements exist because the whole system exists.

The study of social-pedagogical system essence, their integrity is impossible without *complex approach*. The complex approach at studying the educational system supposes: system and thorough analysis of the results of pedagogical activity; detection of regular connection on vertical and horizontal plans; determination of the specific conditions and problems of society; development of technologies of teaching; substantiation of the content.

Personal-oriented approach makes it possible to develop the subject content of the process of developing reading skills focused on students' needs and interests. A person-oriented approach to the pedagogical process means a focus on the formation of the student as a personality, the full implementation of internal resources on the basis of mutual assistance, cooperation, and joint creativity of the students and a teacher.

The model of the process of university students' reading skills development is shown in Figure 2.

The model includes determinant, operational and functional components. *Determinant and operational* components are implemented in three units: motivational, modeling and evaluation-corrective.

The determinant component is focused on developing reading skills.

The operational component involves the development of knowledge in English necessary for reading texts of a certain complexity.

Let us discuss the internal units that are common to the determinant and operational components. We highlight three units: motivational, modeling and evaluation-corrective.

The motivational unit is connected with students' motivational sphere and performs the following functions: motivates and stimulates students' educational and cognitive activity; has an impact on the student's personality; encourages the

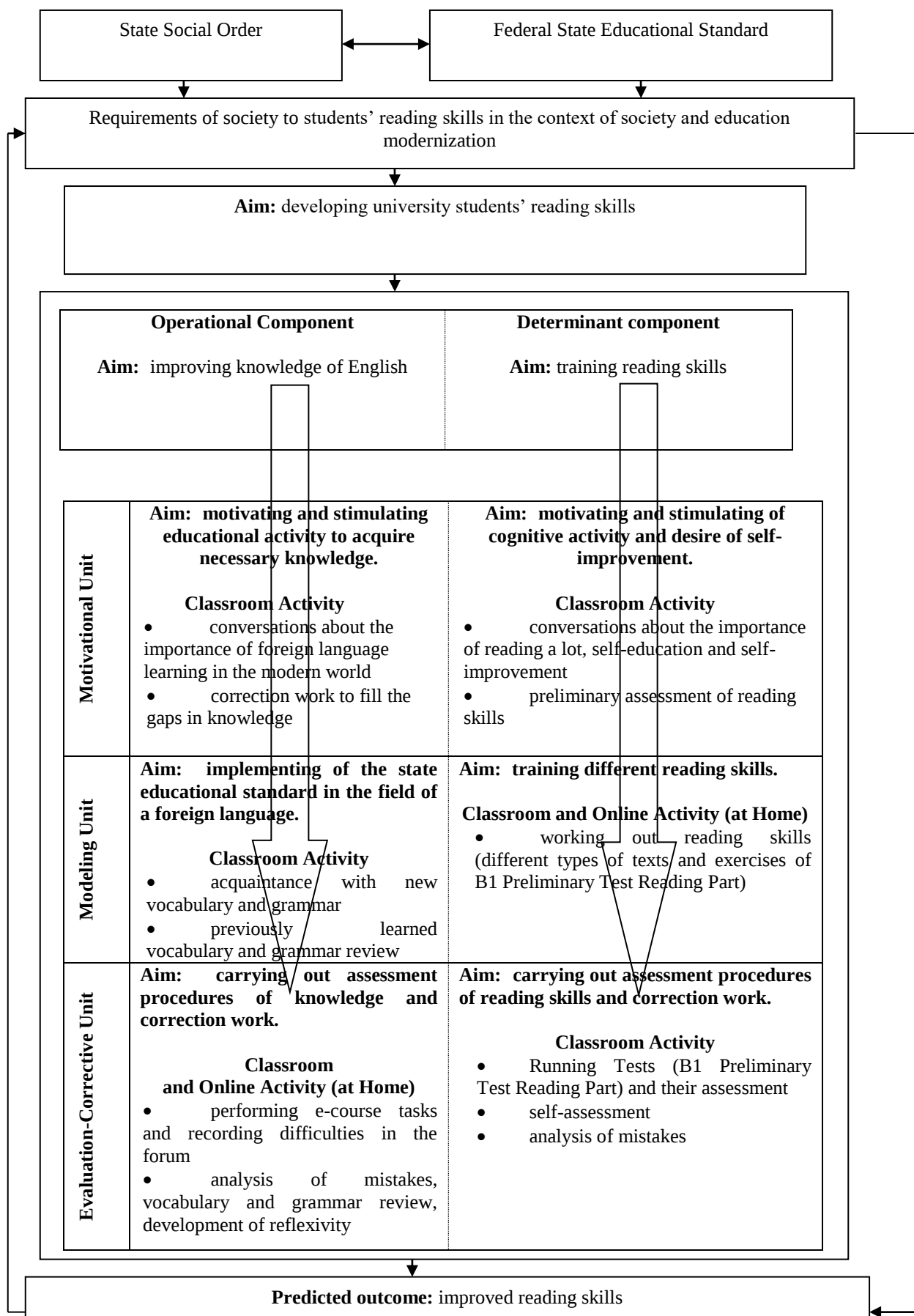


Figure 2. Model of the process of university students reading skills' development

need for self-education and improvement.

Modeling unit focuses on implementing of the state educational standard in the field of a foreign language and training different reading skills necessary and important for better comprehending various types of texts.

The evaluation-corrective unit serves to determine the degree of compliance of the obtained results with the desired ones and to eliminate the identified shortcomings. This unit allows the teacher to see how effective the process of developing reading skills is, to control the effectiveness of pedagogical influence and make adjustments. The student, in turn, has the opportunity to see his results, his “progress” in learning and self-education; he forms a reflexivity that makes it possible to be aware of his activities. This unit is connected with the motivational and modeling units in such a way that depending on the identified shortcomings, the teacher can return either to the process of formation of educational motivation or to the practical implementation of reading skills’ development.

As a result of the study, we can say that correctional work is not necessary if reading skills are formed in all students quite effectively.

The research also uses the methods of *analysis and synthesis* to formulate scientific and practical conclusions regarding the problems of teaching reading in blended learning, to study the principles of reading in blended learning environment, and to plan future teaching activities.

Functional components of the model are stable basic connections of structural components, which determine the development and improvement of our model. These include the following: a) goal-setting, motivating, prognostic (functions of the motivational unit); b) gnostic and organizational (functions of the modeling unit); c) diagnostic, corrective, reflexive (functions of the evaluation-correcting unit).

Each model unit is closed, relatively autonomous and implemented in sequence.

In our research we also use the methods of *analysis and synthesis* to formulate scientific and practical conclusions regarding the problems of teaching reading in

blended learning, to study the principles of reading in blended learning environment, and to plan future teaching activities.

Statistical analysis is used for summarizing data and explaining the results of the research.

Theoretical analysis is used to analyze the studies devoted to the blended learning and reading.

Results

These results aim to clarify the most important points and aspects that have been reached in the theoretical chapter.

Blended learning is a technology which combines face-to-face and online activities based on the possibilities of the digital technologies for making the learning process more efficient.

The following types of blended learning conceptualizations which are viewed differently at the blended learning process are inclusive, quality, quantity, synchronous and digital classroom.

The most important principles of efficient blended learning are encouraging active learning and communication between students and teachers, developing students' cooperation, respecting various ways of learning, quick feedback, accentuating time on tasks given.

The main benefits of blended learning are saving money and time, flexibility, easy access and use, reduction of stress for teachers and learners, effective interaction, improving learning and teaching, the opportunity for cooperation, making good use of time, maintaining students' focus during the lesson, improving learning results.

The main disadvantages of blended learning are the dependence on digital devices, Internet connection, a problem for people with low IT literacy and competence.

A teacher as a facilitator of online learning, the presence of the teacher online is critical for students during their online experience as students learn more effectively when they are guided rather than directed.

Reading is the process of perceiving and understanding information from different types of texts, by recognizing and realizing the meaning of words, and comprehending sentence structure.

The basic skills of reading are making predictions from a text type, making inferences from a text, skimming, previewing, activating prior knowledge,

identifying cohesive devices, working out the meaning of key words from context, and scanning.

The process of teaching reading aloud involves the following ways – phonic, word and sentence ones.

System of exercises of teaching reading include grapheme-phonemic, structural-information and semantic-communication exercises.

Activities of working with any text are pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading ones, which have different goals.

The pedagogical system is a complex set of exercise, methods approaches, techniques designed to create an engaging learning effect.

It is appropriate to build the model of the development of reading skills on the basis of systematic, complex and personality-oriented approaches.

The model of the development of reading skills is characterized by linear-return structure, integrity, adaptability, and included functional and structural (motivational, modeling and evaluation-corrective units) components.

CHAPTER II

EXPERIMENTAL WORK ON TEACHING READING IN BLENDED LEARNING

2.1 General Characteristics of the Experimental Work

The main theoretical result of our Master's thesis research is the design of a model of teaching reading in blended learning format. In order to practically verify the truth of the data obtained, it is necessary to test this model in a real educational process. The validity of the conclusions obtained is determined by a pedagogical experiment, which allows under controlled conditions to consider the investigated phenomenon and record the most significant factors affecting the effectiveness of its functioning.

In the general scientific sense, the experiment is “a scientific procedure undertaken to make a discovery, test a hypothesis, or demonstrate a known fact” (Oxford Dictionary). An experiment, based on the goals of pedagogical research in the scientific literature, is understood as “a method of scientific research based on the initiation of a certain process (phenomenon) or influence on a given process, on such regulation of this process, which allows it to be controlled and measured, as well as verify the accepted hypotheses” (Okon, 1990, p. 27).

The purpose of our pedagogical experiment is to check the effectiveness of the implementation of the model of the process of teaching reading the first-year students of non-linguistic specialties in the educational process of the university, which will confirm the fairness of the theoretical ideas put forward by us for its design (formulated concepts, identified properties, selected methodological approaches, etc.).

In the structure of the pedagogical experiment, researchers traditionally distinguish the stating (initial and final) and forming stages.

The stating and forming stages differ from each other in tasks, content, and methods of carrying out. The task of the stating stage is to define the state of this object (in our case, the presence of the necessary reading skills among students).

The task of the forming stage is to create new conditions, content, forms, methods, etc., that is, it consists in applying the author's model aimed at forming the necessary reading skills among students.

At the stating stage of the experiment preceding the forming one, we determined:

- 1) pilot work plan and its implementation highlights;
- 2) a representative sample of students participating in the experiment;
- 3) diagnostic methods for objective assessment of the students' reading skills formation level.

The forming stage was conducted in the natural conditions of the educational process and included the practical realization of the model of the process of teaching reading and assessment of the effectiveness of its functioning.

The stating stage of the experiment, following the forming one, was intended to assess the influence of the model developed by us on the efficiency and effectiveness of the teaching reading process.

Experimental work aimed at checking the effectiveness of the model we developed was carried in 2021-2022 as part of the educational process of South Ural State University (NRU). At different stages of the experiment, the study covered 70 1st and 2nd year students of the technical specialties of SUSU.

For our experiment, we chose a plan involving the introduction of the created model into the educational process of the experimental group using preliminary and final knowledge assessment.

Our experimental group consisted of 18 1st year students of Higher School of Electronics and Computer Sciences of SUSU. By the end of the 2021-2022 academic year those students were required to show an intermediate level of English proficiency (B1 – CEFR scale). This group is chosen because this level is the most common among 1st year university students of non-linguistic specialties.

That is why, the B1 Preliminary (PET) test (its Reading Part) is chosen as a test of reading skills, which allows you to assess the students' initial level and progress when completing reading tasks.

At level B1 students can comprehend the following connected with reading (Cambridge Assessment English, 2019):

- Overall general ability (routine information and articles)
- Social & Tourist (factual articles in newspapers, routine letters from hotels and letters expressing personal opinions)
- Work (the general meaning of non-routine letters and theoretical articles within own work area)
- Study (most information of a factual nature in his/her study area).

Reading part of the test consists of 6 different parts:

1) *Multiple choice* (students have to read real-world notices, messages and other short texts for the main message);

2) *Matching* (students have to match descriptions of people to short texts on a particular topic, showing detailed comprehension);

3) *Multiple choice* (students have to read a longer text for detailed comprehension, gist, inference and global meaning, as well as writer's attitude and opinion);

4) *Gapped text* (students have to read a longer text from which some sentences have been removed and show understanding of how a coherent and well-structured text is formed);

5) *Multiple choice cloze* (students have to read a shorter text and choose the correct vocabulary items to complete gaps);

6) *Open cloze* (read a shorter text and complete gaps using one word for each gap) (Preliminary Exam Format).

The preliminary assessment of knowledge in reading skills using the tasks of the exam Reading part shows that the average result is 21 points (out of 35) which is equal to 60 percent (Figure 3). The average or lower result show 10 students. It means that students have some difficulties while completing tasks, the reason for which we see in the insufficient development of reading skills.

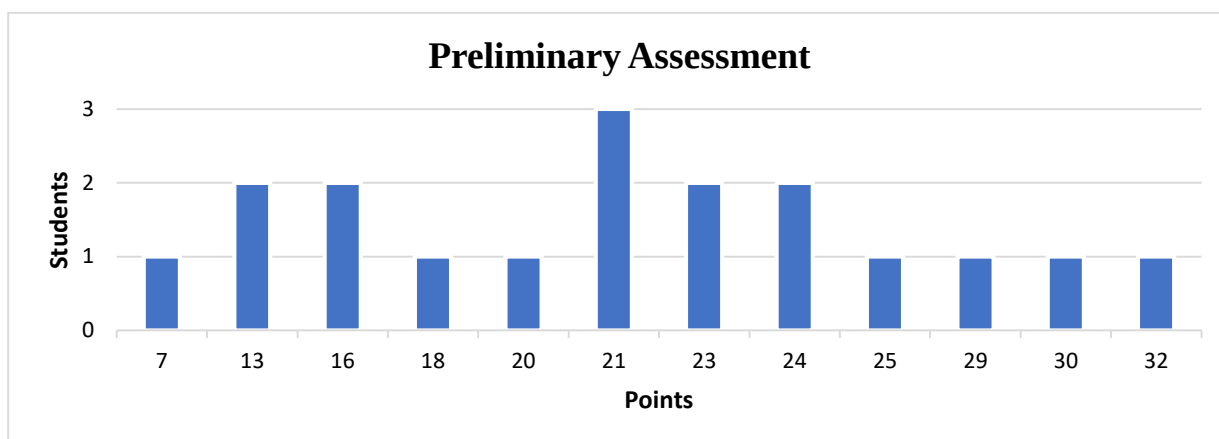


Figure 3. Results of the preliminary reading skills assessment

That is why the aim of our experimental work was to develop necessary reading skills. We organized our lessons the following way: we were working with texts face-to-face in the classroom and students completed some tasks at home in the form of tests using their gadgets (computers, laptops, smartphones). At home they were working on their own pace, having one week to train exercises of each reading part of the PET test.

The goals and objectives of face-to-face activities and online activities were different.

2.2 Model on Teaching Reading Skills Realization

2.2.1 Face-to-Face Activities

Goals and objectives of face-to-face activities were the following:

- practicing reading aloud (pronunciation, intonation, rhythm, stress);
- developing reading skills (skimming, scanning, predictions, inferences, previewing, activating prior knowledge, working out the meaning of key words from context and so on);
- developing communication skills (exercises for discussion: working with a partner, answering the questions, discussing the issues);

- learning new vocabulary and grammar (reading words and phrases aloud paying attention to their pronunciation, matching the words to their definitions, completing the sentences using no more than three words, using the following words to complete the sentences and so on);
- working with different types of texts in order to see the differences between them (announcements, narration, description, expository texts).

The first part of the lesson was given to different types of rather long texts to practice different reading skills.

The following example of the text with exercises showed how we were working with it face-to-face.

Greenland

Greenland is a huge island in the far, far north of the world. The weather there is very harsh and cold. Even the 'hottest' summer day on Greenland is like a cool winter's day in England. In the summer months, the sun never sets; it is light all through the night. The warmest part of the island is on the south coast and that is where most Greenlanders live. However, it is still a very hard place to live because of the cold.

Over the years, different groups of people have tried to live in Greenland, but most found it too difficult. One man who did live there, and one of the most famous Greenlanders, was 'Erik the Red'. Erik's name might have come from the colour of his hair and beard, or possibly because of his bad temper. About 1000 years ago, Erik was sent away from his home in Iceland. He sailed away from this small ice-covered island to a great big ice-covered island. This island had no name yet and no one lived there, so Erik made it his home.

The old stories of Iceland say that Erik became bored and lonely and wanted to persuade other people to come and live on this freezing-cold island with him. Erik had an idea. He called the island 'Greenland' and pretended that it was lovely, warm and green. His trick worked. When the people from Iceland heard about this perfect place called 'Greenland', many of them wanted to join Erik. About 300 of them packed up their belongings and set off to join him.

Although life was hard, these people lived on Greenland for many years and it became their home. They built houses that were snug and strong from stone, wood and turf. They planted crops and kept cows, goats and sheep which they had brought with them all the way from Iceland. However, 500 years later, there was nothing left of Erik and his friends in Greenland. What happened to them is still a mystery. (From: <https://www.esolcourses.com/content/reading/intermediate/graded-readers/greenland.html>)

Pre-reading exercises

1. Work with a partner. Discuss the statements below.

- a) The climate of all countries in the world is different.
- b) People live everywhere.
- c) You can easily move from hot countries to cold ones and live there.

2. Read the words aloud paying attention to their pronunciation: harsh, to persuade, to pretend, belongings, although, snug.

3. Use the words from the previous exercise in your own sentences.

4. Match the words to their definitions.

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 1) although | a) very cold, dangerous, or unpleasant and difficult to live in |
| 2) pretend | b) the things that you own |
| 3) harsh | c) warm, comfortable, and protected |
| 4) belongings | d) make someone agree to do something by talking to them a lot about it |
| 5) persuade | e) behave as if something is true when it is not |
| 6) snug | f) despite the fact that |

4. Skim the text. What type of text is it?

5. Read the first sentence of each paragraph to understand the main idea.

While-reading exercises

1. Correct the factual mistakes in the sentences below.

- a) Greenland is an island in the south of the world.
- b) It is always dark there.
- c) It is a nice place to live.
- d) Erik's name might have come from the colour of the house where he lived.
- e) A lot of people lived in an island where Erik sailed to live.
- f) Erik was happy to live alone.

2. Complete the sentences below using no more than three words.

- a) Erik wanted other people to with him.
- b) People packed up
- c) Houses were from stone.
- d) People kept such animals as

After reading exercises

1. Work with a partner. Discuss the questions below.

- a) Why do people move from one place to another?
- b) How is it possible to make life of people easier in harsh weather conditions?
- c) Is it possible for people to disappear without a trace?

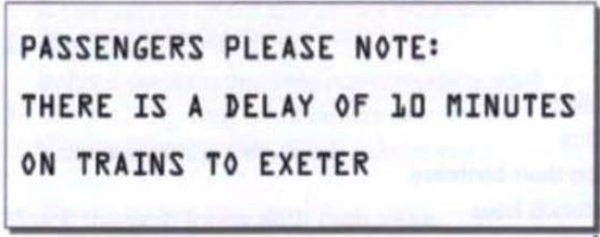
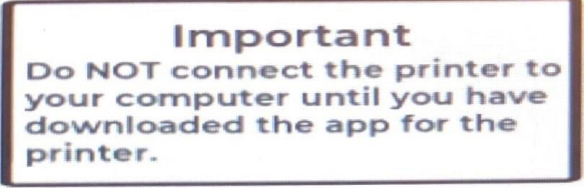
More texts with exercises we developed are given in Appendix 1.

The second part of the lesson was giving to the tasks from the *Reading part* of the exam test. Before giving the tasks from *Reading part* of the test to practice at home, students were practicing the similar tasks at the lessons with a teacher for them to know how to perform each part. Students were given paper versions of tasks for their convenience of making necessary notes. Each week we were practicing one part from the Reading part.

Part 1 deals with small texts such as signs, text messages, notices in magazines, announcements, packaging information, postcards, websites and so on which students can meet in real life situations. This part checks how students can understand different kinds of short texts.

So, the students were given small texts and three options to each of them from which they had to choose one. The main task was to extract the meaning from them.

For part 1 in the classroom students were given the following small texts and tasks:

	a) Trains to Exeter are all ten minutes late. b) The train journey to Exeter takes ten minutes. c) The next train to Exeter will arrive in ten minutes.
<i>Hi Penelope, The hotel is in a fantastic location - just as you described it. Thanks for recommending it. Liked it so much we've already booked for next year! Monika.</i>	a) Monika has stayed in the hotel before. b) Penelope has already visited the hotel Monika is staying in. c) Monika and Penelope are planning to go to the hotel together next year.
	a) You must connect the printer after you download the app. b) You must connect the printer before you download the app. c) You must not connect the computer to the printer.
	a) You mustn't ask questions to the examiner. b) Please respect others and remain quiet during the examination.

	c) Do not talk to the teacher.
	a) It costs at least £50 to park here for two hours. b) There are no parking charges after 2.00 pm. c) You have to pay a fine if you park here for three hours.

While completing such tasks special attention was given to the style of these texts: they are short, brief by their nature, may have some instructions, contacts, and links. They usually use simple language, the sentences are not complex but you can find some specific vocabulary; sometimes imperatives or commands are used. They can be handwritten; also sometimes capital letters are used, it means that special attention should be paid to this information (ASEAN, 2012).

Speaking about grammar and vocabulary we should say that usually the language is quiet simple, clear and unambiguous; sentences can be incomplete, even just a set of words or a phrase.

Also, one of the problems at the beginning of working with such texts was that students noticed, for example, some numbers, and in one of the alleged answers there was also such a number, and they chose this particular option, although, most often, this answer was wrong. We explained that to complete such tasks successfully it was necessary to pay attention to the whole information given in the text and avoid word-spotting.

Part 2 is quite big in volume, so students need quite a lot of time to complete this task. There are five short descriptions of people and eight short texts (places) with information for these people on a particular topic. It means that three texts are in there to confuse the issue. It is necessary to match these people with a perfect option for each of them. The students must show detailed comprehension. This part checks how students can comprehend factual material in detail. The example of the task of this part is given below.

 1. Marco studies physics and is interested in anything to do with science. He'd like to visit a place to see some examples of early mechanical engines.	A. Stratford Butterfly Farm The biggest butterfly farm in Europe. Whatever the weather come and see these beautiful creatures as they would live in their natural environment. Walk around a tropical rainforest as butterflies fly freely – around you. See them as they come into the world in the Caterpillar Room. And don't miss Insect City where you can view huge spiders and our very own scorpion colony!
 2. Gemma wants to take her 5-year-old to see some animals. She'd also like to look around some shops to buy something for her mother's birthday.	B. National Sea-Life Centre You wouldn't expect to bump into a hammerhead shark whilst visiting Brum city centre. But yes, it's true, The National Sea Life Centre in Birmingham is the only aquarium in the UK where you can see this creature along with our Sea Dragons from Australia and baby stingrays from the Amazon. We guarantee an experience you'll never forget.
 3. Ingrid's eldest daughter is learning about English history and would like to go somewhere to bring this subject to life. Ingrid is really interested in flowers.	C. Coventry Transport Museum Coventry Transport Museum hosts the world's largest transport collection. A day out here will give you the chance to see some of the earliest motor cars as well as more modern vehicles like the De Lorean 'back from the future' car. You can also design your own car and experience what breaking the sound barrier at 763 miles an hour feels like.
 4. Trevor is an artist and enjoys drawing wildlife. He recently visited a zoo and drew large animals and would like to try sketching something smaller.	D. Warwick Castle Regarded by many as Britain's greatest Medieval Castle. Visit exhibitions, climb the castle towers, relax as you walk around the gardens, designed and created in 1753 by Capability Brown. Experience the preparations for battle in the Kingmaker exhibition or witness a Victorian Royal Weekend. And if your interest is more in the darker side of the Castle's history visit The Castle Dungeon.
 5. Sarah and her husband would like to spend the day outdoors. They don't like going on rides but are both interested in history and	E. ThinkTank At Thinktank you will find four floors of hands-on exhibits and historical collections that will amaze and inspire you, showing you the science of the world all around us from the past, the present and the future. From galleries and exhibitions to an exciting programme of events and activities, there

how people used to live.	is something for everyone to enjoy, whether your interest is steam engines, looking into deepest space or seeing how doctors perform life-saving surgery.
	F. Drayton Manner One of the UK's most popular attractions. The park is home to some of the scariest rides you'll find like Stormforce 10 and Apocalypse, which has been voted the UK's most frightening ride. You'll also find an indoor and outdoor play area and of course, Drayton Manor Zoo with over one hundred different species, including twelve rare breeds from across the world.
	G. Hatton Country World If you're keen on seeing unique crafts and craft work side-by-side with antique shops and a traditional butchers shop, Hatton Country World is the place for you. As well as these wonderful shops you'll be able to enjoy the Farm Park with many farm animals to help keep the kids entertained.
	H. Black Country Museum It's been called Britain's friendliest open-air museum. Come to Black Country Museum and discover an old-fashioned village by the canal. Look around original old-fashioned shops and houses, see what it's like down a mine and take a ride on a tramcar.

To work with this task it is better to underline key words or key ideas. Then, students read the description of five people and find at least three key ideas in each description. As it is necessary to read eight descriptions of places quickly, students can start with skimming. Each text can be used only for one person. It means that you can not use one and the same text for several people. That is why it is necessary to pay attention that all points and key moments are taken into consideration while choosing the suitable answer. The texts should be read very carefully in order to find all matches between places and people. Again, while choosing an answer word-spotting should be avoided. The main attention should be given to the meaning of texts.

The descriptions are stylistically neutral but sometimes can be emotionally-coloured; they have full sentences which are usually affirmative or exclamatory. Grammar and vocabulary are quite various corresponding to this level. So, it is necessary not only to train reading skills but also pay special attention to some grammar rules (active and especially passive voice, sentences with would like, there is / there are, comparative and superlative degrees of adjectives, modal verbs, pronouns, yes-no questions, imperatives and commands).

Part 3 deals with a text expressing attitude or opinion. These texts can be from newspapers and magazines, non-fiction books and simplified encyclopaedias, websites, leaflets and brochures. This part checks how students can read a long text for gist, global meaning, inference, writer's opinion or attitude and detailed comprehension. The example of the task of this part is given below.

Notting Hill Carnival

Notting Hill Carnival takes place in London every August bank holiday. It is the most colorful and largest street event in the UK. The festival celebrates the traditions of the Afro-Caribbean community, who emigrated to England from the West Indies in the 1950s. They brought the Caribbean idea of the carnival with colorful costumes, processions, steel bands, and street dancing. Preparations for the carnival start many months in advance. Costumes need to be made and floats built, ready for the carnival street procession. Steel bands practise traditional Caribbean music on instruments built from used oil barrels. Just before the festival, the streets are decorated with yellow, green, and red streamers, and amplifying devices are set in place, to carry the rhythmic sounds over the roar of the London traffic. The carnival is celebrated for more than three days and is full of music and color. Processions of steel and brass bands, floats, and dancers in colorful costumes make their way through the narrow London streets, watched by tens of thousands of people. The streets are lined with stalls selling tropical fruits, such as fresh mangoes, watermelons, and pineapple. Everyone dances – young and old,

black and white – and even the policemen on duty take part in the fun. For these three days in August, a little Caribbean magic touches the streets of London.

1) What is the writer's main aim in writing the text?

- a) to encourage people to celebrate the traditions of black people;
- b) to talk about problems with the Afro-Caribbean community;
- c) to recommend people spend more time outdoors;
- d) to understand and describe the Notting Hill Carnival.

2) According to the passage, Notting Hill Carnival ...

- a) takes place every Bank Holiday;
- b) is held annually in August;
- c) is organized by the Bank of England;
- d) is held at the beginning of August.

3) During the Notting Hill Carnival,

- a) the participants in the carnival decorate the streets with colourful streamers;
- b) preparations start early in the morning;
- c) music and colour fill the streets of London;
- d) traffic is banned from the main shopping streets.

4) The writer claims that

- a) this carnival has been organized since at least the 1950s;
- b) tens of thousands of people take part in the preparations for the carnival;
- c) dancers in the carnival wear special clothes;
- d) the dancers in the carnival are from the black community;

5) Although the carnival is a celebration of the traditions of black British ...

- a) everyone seems to participate in it;
- b) only Caribbean people take part in it;
- c) it is gaining in popularity among the white in recent years;
- d) people from all over the world come to watch it.

The text is quite long so there can be not enough time if a student is not a fast reader and especially in the second language. That is why it is a good idea to skim the text in order to find out general meaning and the topic.

When answering the questions it is very important not to project your ideas and experiences onto the text but read the text carefully.

As there are five multiple-choice questions each with four options, it is necessary to deal with them one by one because students should compare each option with the text every time they are going to choose. The first four questions usually go in order of the text, and the fifth one concentrates on global meaning.

Usually texts of this part are stylistically neutral descriptions or narrations with complete sentences. The vocabulary is rather versatile but topics are famous. As for grammar it is usually present and past simple tenses in active and passive voice.

Part 4 deals with quite a long text with five gaps. For these gaps eight sentences are given. It means that three sentences are extra and students do not need to use them. Each sentence can be used only once. These texts are usually stylistically neutral narrations. They can be taken from newspapers and magazines or websites. In this part students must show that they understand the cohesion and coherence of the text, can follow the narration, opinions and attitudes within it. The example of the task of this part is given below.

The Great Fire of London

London was a busy city in 1666. It was very crowded. The streets were narrow and dusty. The houses were made of wood and very close together. Inside their homes, people used candles for light and cooked on open fires. A fire could easily get out of control. 1)

The fire began on early Sunday morning on the 2nd of September. It started in Pudding Lane in the shop of the king's baker, Thomas Farrior. When Thomas went to bed, he did not put out the fire that heated his oven. 2) The flames spread through the house, down Pudding Lane and into the nearby streets.

Soon London was filled with smoke. 3) By Monday, 300 houses had burned down. Everybody was in a panic. People loaded their things onto carts and tried to leave town. Others tried to get away on boats on the river. Some people buried their things in the garden, hoping to save them from the fire.

4) London Bridge and St Paul's Cathedral were both burnt. On Tuesday, King Charles II ordered that houses and shops be pulled down to stop the fire from spreading. By Wednesday, they had the fire under control. But by then, 100,000 people were homeless. Thomas Farrior and his wife got out of their bakery in time, but a woman who worked for them was too frightened to jump from the roof. She was the first to die. Surprisingly, only nine people died as a result of the fire.

Two people have left us eyewitness accounts of the fire. The first is Samuel Pepys, who worked for the Navy. He kept a diary from 1660-1669. The second is John Evelyn, who also kept a diary. Both men describe how dramatic and scary the fire was. Not everyone at the time thought that the fire was an accident. However, the fire was most likely caused by chance rather than by a deliberate act.

King Charles II ordered that 10 October 1666 be a day of fasting on account of the fire. He told the Lord Mayor of London to support collections for victims of the fire. 5) It was the work of Sir Christopher Wren, who designed many new buildings, including St Paul's Cathedral, when the city was rebuilt after the fire.

(<https://www.esolcourses.com/content/reading/intermediate/graded-readers/the-great-fire-of-london.html>)

1. In those days there were no fire engines or firefighters to stop a fire from spreading.

2. Sparks from the oven fell onto some dry flour sacks and they caught fire.

3. The sky was red with huge flames from the fire.

4. The fire still spread, helped by a strong wind from the east.

5. Later, close to Pudding Lane, a monument was built so that people would not forget the fire.

6. The fire still spread, helped by strong rain.

7. Later, close to Pudding Lane, a new house was built so that people would not forget the fire.

8. Sparks from the oven fell onto some dishes and they caught fire.

The main difficulty with the text is that the task is not connected with real life because in real life we do not need to put sentences into the text. That is why this task can be difficult for students.

To complete the task successfully students need to read the whole text first. It will help them to understand the narration. Choosing a suitable sentence in this task is quite difficult because it should suit the gap completely. It means that it should fit the text (the attention must be paid to the sentences before and after the gap). Grammar is very important, too. If students think that they have chosen the sentence correctly they should check whether the other sentences fit or not and why. After all gaps are filled in it is necessary to read the whole text and see whether it makes sense, it means, that it is well-structured and without mistakes.

Speaking about grammar the main attention should be paid to present and past simple in active and passive voice.

Part 5 deals with a short text with six words removed from it. That means that the text contains six spaces which are numbered; each removed word is followed by 3 other words. The task is to choose the correct answer for each gap (to choose the suitable word). The example of the task of this part is given below.

Sewing Machine

As 1) back as 1775 there were attempts to invent the sewing machine, but it was not until 1830 that the practical machine was invented by Barthelemy Thimmonier of France. It was 2) largely of wood and had a hooked needle which made a “chain stitch”. About 1848 the “eye needle” was invented, and the first man to use 3) needle successfully was the American, Elias Howe. Howe’s machine used the “lock stitch”, and had a little shuttle which carried the 4) through the loop made by the needle.

In 1850 Alien Benjamin Wilson improved the sewing machine by 5) the round bobbin and hook, but, like Howe’s machine, it was still operated by hand. It

was Isaac Singer who invented the foot treadle and a presser foot 6) that kept the fabric in place.

- | | | | | |
|---|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | A far | B long | C near | D short |
| 2 | A done | B made | C created | D produced |
| 3 | A this | B these | C those | D it |
| 4 | A on | B under | C through | D behind |
| 5 | A invent | B inventing | C invented | D to invent |
| 6 | A gadget | B machine | C apparatus | D device |

In each case, the words are related (all nouns, for example, or related to one topic, etc.) and of similar meaning. As the task deals with vocabulary it is necessary to extend a lexicon training different clichés and expressions. It is a good idea to train synonyms, some phrasal verbs, and prepositions.

To complete this task successfully it is necessary to skim the text first in order to find out the general meaning and the topic. After that students should read each sentence with a gap and decide which word out of four is suitable for this gap. Also, it is necessary to check the other three words and decide why they can be wrong.

This task checks vocabulary but some grammatical knowledge is also needed, such as complementation or that some nouns are uncountable and can't be used with an indefinite article.

Part 6 deals with a short text with six spaces. It is one of the most difficult parts because the task is to think of the words which can fill the gaps. That is why for a face-to-face activity we chose three texts. The examples of these texts are given below.

Text 1 Our Holiday in Spain

Our trip to Spain was wonderful! First, we flew to Valencia, one of the (1) ... beautiful cities in Spain. It's a picturesque and elegant port city. We stayed at Hampton by Hilton there for three nights. We went sightseeing and just relaxed at the swimming pool.

From Valencia, we flew to Ibiza, arriving (2) ... Saturday morning. We went to Las Salinas, (3) ... is one of the most popular beaches in Ibiza. The next day, we had a go (4) ... water skiing or parasailing. One night, we took a bus tour to a traditional Ibizan village and stayed for dinner and a Flamenco show. We heard Spanish songs for voice and guitar, and we saw traditional dances - it (5) ... a very special evening.

From Sant Jordi, we drove to San Rafael. We stayed there for two nights. The very next day, we went back to Ibiza and flew back to Valencia. We plan to come back to Spain soon, (6) ... for now, we're on our way to Portugal!

Text 2 My New House

Guess what! We moved to a new house last week. It's really great! It has two floors. On the ground floor, (1) ... is a spacious living room with a stone fireplace. Next (2) ... the living room, we have a big kitchen. My mum likes spending her time there, as she loves cooking.

We have a bathroom on each floor. I'm very happy (3) ... I have my own room. It's on the first floor, opposite my brother's bedroom. And my parents' bedroom is on the second floor. We also have a beautiful garden in front of the house. There aren't (4) ... trees or bushes because my mum loves tulips. That's why this garden is full (5) ... tulips!

We also have a small backyard behind the house, (6) ... I usually spend my free time and play with my friends. But I can't ride a bike or play with my dog there.

Text 3 Beautiful Scotland

We're in Scotland! We're staying in a hotel in the centre of Edinburgh. We don't usually come to Scotland on holiday, but we're having a wonderful time here. The sun's shining (1) ... the moment, so Mum and Dad are eating ice cream in a cafe. My brother's writing postcards and I'm sitting in an internet cafe just round the corner (2) ... our hotel.

Scotland is a beautiful country, but the weather is awful. It often rains in Scotland, but it isn't raining today. (3) ... we are on holiday; we always go to a different place every day. We also visit famous buildings, old castles (4) ... historic sites.

Last week, we went to Loch Ness, but we didn't see the monster, unfortunately. My brother often (5) ... photos of everything and Mum always writes a diary. I'm sending you some photographs with this email, and I hope you like (6) ...

The main difficulty is that the words for these gaps are not given. That means that students must have good vocabulary to complete this task, so it is necessary also to train phrasal words and some common fixed phrases. But the question is not only in vocabulary because this task checks the knowledge of different grammatical structures such as *there is / there are, some / any / no*, and other.

To successfully complete this part it is necessary to skim-read the whole text in order to find out the general meaning and the topic. Each gap must be filled in by a single word which makes sense. Some special attention should be given to the spelling. After completing all the gaps it is necessary to read the whole text to see if it makes sense and that it is grammatically correct.

2.2.2 Online Activities at Home

The main *goals and objectives of online activities at home* were to work with different types of texts in order to know how to perform tasks of the Reading part of the test. For this purpose we created an online course for students to work at home (Figure 4) (<https://edu.susu.ru/course/view.php?id=154136>):

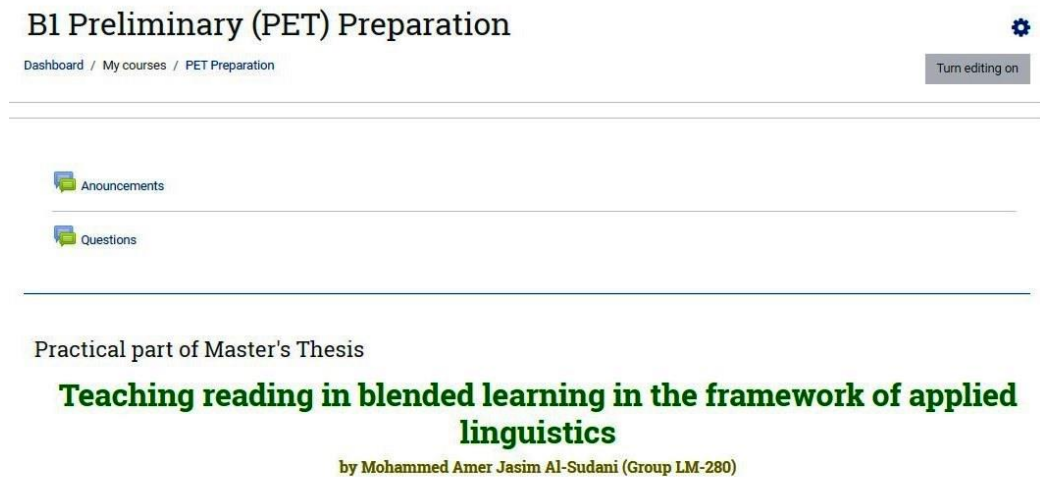


Figure 4. The title page of the online course on the Moodle platform

In this course we put information about the test and how to perform its part (figure 5):

About PET and Reading Parts

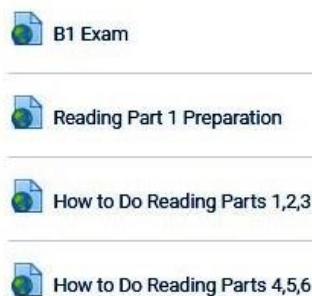


Figure 5. Information about the exam and its Reading parts

There is information about each part of the Reading part of the test such as a file with texts and exercises which we were working with in the classroom (for those students who had been absent at the lessons for some reasons). We decided to include these files into the course for students to have an opportunity to train at home. For each part we found some tips how to complete it and some links to train at home. Also, we gave the students the opportunity to express their opinions about performing the tasks at home in the forum (after each part) (Figures 6-11).

Part 1 Notices, Signs, Messages

Tips for the PET (B1: Preliminary) Multiple Choice Part 1

In the PET Part 1 Multiple Choice task, you will read real-life notices, messages and other short texts and you need to show that you can understand the main idea.

- The first time you read the text, decide what it might be: a notice, an email, a text message ect.
- Before you look at the options, decide what you think the main message in the text is.
- Read the three options and try to match the correct one.
- Don't choose an answer just because it contains a word that is in the text.
- Look out for words or expressions in the options that have a similar meaning to ones in the text.
- Double check your answer before you move on to the next question.

 Preparation to Part 1 + Face-to-Face Activities

 Part 1 (Short Texts)

 Part 1 (Signs)

 Part 1 (Signs)

 part 1



Figure 6. Part 1 of the Reading Part

Part 2 Matching Descriptions to Short Texts

Tips for the PET (B1: Preliminary) Matching Part 2

In the PET Part 2 Matching task, you need to be able to Match five descriptions of people to eight short texts on a particular topic, showing detailed comprehension. Here are some tips to follow when attempting the PET Part 2 Matching task:

- Read the descriptions of the people first. Underline any key words or expressions like days, dates, etc.
- Read the 8 texts and try to identify those that match the people. To begin with you may find more than one that seem to match.
- Read the texts again and focus on detail. Just because a word appears in both texts, this does not mean that this is the correct choice to make. In fact, pay attention to any synonyms (words with a similar meaning) as this might indicate the option could be correct.
- Look out for anything that indicates the answer is wrong such as days, prices, or any other issues make the answer wrong.

 Preparation to Part 2 + Face-to-Face Activities

 Part 2 (Matching)

 Part 2 (Matching)

 Part 2 (Matching)

 part 2

Figure 7. Part 2 of the Reading Part

Part 3 A Long Text with Comprehension Questions

Tips for the PET (B1: Preliminary) Multiple Choice (Part 3)

In the PET Part 3 Multiple Choice task, you need to be able to show you understand details, overall meaning as well as the writer's attitude and opinion. Here are some tips to follow when attempting the PET Part 3 Multiple Choice task:

- Use the title to get an idea of the theme of the text.
- Read the text first before you try to answer any questions. This will help you get an overall idea of the topic and the writer's opinion.
- Read each question, find and underline the part of the text which answers the question. The answers to the questions will generally follow in the same order in the text.
- Don't choose an answer simply because a word in the question appears in the text. Examples of this can sometimes distract you from the correct answer.

 Preparation to Part 3 + Face-to-Face Activities

 Part 3 (A Long Text and Comprehension Questions)

 Part 3 (A Long Text and Comprehension Questions)

 Part 3 (A Long Text and Comprehension Questions)

 part 3

Figure 8. Part 3 of the Reading Part

Part 4 Gapped Text

Tips for the PET (B1: Preliminary) Part 4 Gapped Text

In the PET Part 4 Gapped Text task, you need to be able to show understanding of how a coherent and well-structured text is formed. Here are some tips to follow when attempting the PET Part 4 Gapped Text task:

- Read the whole text first before you attempt to answer any questions. This will give you an idea of the overall structure.
- As you read the text try to identify what each paragraph is about. This will help you work out the missing sentences.
- Read the sentences to get a general idea of the topic of each one.
- Look out for words and expressions that help link ideas. These could be things like time phrases, contrasting linking words and expressions, pronouns or synonyms that refer forwards or backwards in the text.
- Make sure any sentence you chose fits both with what comes before and after. You will often find one that seems to be OK with what comes before, but which does not fit with the following sentence.
- As you work through the task, be prepared to change your opinion on an earlier choice. If you don't do this and your original choice is wrong, you are limiting the choice of remaining sentences.

 Preparation to Part 4 + Face-to-Face Activities

 Part 4 (Missing Sentences)

 Part 4 (Missing Sentences)

 Part 4 (Missing Sentences)

 Part 4

Figure 9. Part 4 of the Reading Part

Part 5 Choosing a suitable word

Tips for the PET (B1: Preliminary) Part 5 Multiple Choice Cloze

The PET Part 5 Multiple Choice task tests your knowledge of vocabulary, but there will also be some gaps where a grammar word may be required, such as a preposition. Here are some tips to follow when attempting the PET Part 5 Multiple Choice task:

- Use the title to get an idea of the theme of the text.
- Read the text first before you try to answer any questions. This will help you get an overall idea of the topic.
- Decide if any of the options are definitely wrong and then experiment by trying the others in the gap.
- Read the text through the end to see if your choices make sense.

 Preparation to Part 5 + Face-to-Face Activities

 Part 5 (Choosing a Suitable Word)

 Part 5 (Choosing a Suitable Word)

 Part 5 (Choosing a Suitable Word)

 Part 5

Figure 10. Part 5 of the Reading Part

Part 6 Writing a suitable word

Tips for the PET Part 6 Open Cloze

Part 6, the Open Cloze, focuses mainly on grammar. Here are some tips to follow when attempting the Open Cloze task:

- Make sure you read the title and the complete text first before trying to answer any questions. This will sometimes help you to identify missing words.
- Remember that only one word is missing and that contractions count as two words!
- Pay attention to the clauses and words around each gap as these will usually help you identify which word is missing. For example, if the gap is after a verb, is it possible a preposition is missing? If the gap follows a comma, could the missing word be a relative pronoun (who, that, which etc.)? If the gap appears at the beginning of a sentence, could the missing word be a linking word such as 'However' or 'Although'? You'll need to read the sentences before and after to work this last one out.
- Remember that Part 6 focuses mainly on grammar so the missing words are likely to be pronouns, prepositions, determiners, adverbs, linking words etc.

 Preparation to Part 6 + Face-to-Face Activities

 Part 6 (Writing a Suitable Word)

 Part 6 (Writing a Suitable Word)

 Part 6 (Writing a Suitable Word)

 Part 6

Figure 11. Part 6 of the Reading Part

In the forums students wrote about their problems (Figure 12):

This forum allows each person to start one discussion topic.

Add a new discussion topic

Discussion	Started by	Last post ↓	Replies
☆ No problems	 Попов Роман Арт... 25 Apr 2022	 Попов Роман Арт... 25 Apr 2022	0
☆ part 1 Pet 1	 Минниханов Анд... 18 Mar 2022	 Минниханов Анд... 18 Mar 2022	0
☆ Problems	 Семякина Елиз... 18 Mar 2022	 Семякина Елиз... 18 Mar 2022	0
☆ No problems with short texts	 Лупаревич Дани... 17 Mar 2022	 Лупаревич Дани... 17 Mar 2022	0
☆ Problems	 Засова Аделина ... 17 Mar 2022	 Засова Аделина ... 17 Mar 2022	0
☆ Problems	 Домнин Михаил ... 17 Mar 2022	 Домнин Михаил ... 17 Mar 2022	0
☆ My inattention	 Лебедев Никита ... 17 Mar 2022	 Лебедев Никита ... 17 Mar 2022	0
☆ No problem	 Самарин Олег Ва... 17 Mar 2022	 Самарин Олег Ва... 17 Mar 2022	0

Figure 12. Forum in the course

In general, students didn't have problems in performing online tasks at home but there were some (the style and spelling what students wrote in the forums is saved):

✓ Didn't cause much difficulty, but I faced a lack of knowledge of some phrases and translation. So now I'll know :)

✓ I made a few mistakes because of my inattention

✓ No problem, but I made mistakes due to inattention

✓ No problem, but I made mistakes because I was in a hurry

✓ It's not hard to do such tasks, but I did some mistakes because of my bad concentration.

✓ Didn't cause any troubles, but there were a couple of mistakes due to inattention and hurry.

✓ Nothing was difficult, however there is one illogical moment: the fourth person from test 3. He want to stay in quiet place, but will stay at the working farm?

- ✓ No problems , but sometimes unclear questions about texts
- ✓ I had couple of mistakes because of unknown phrasal verbs (hit the record -> break the record).
- ✓ For me it is the most difficult part of PET (*about Part 5*)
- ✓ It was pretty tricky because of synonyms and prepositions
- ✓ The most difficult part for me (*about Part 6*).

It was pleasant and important to know the students' true answers for us to understand their real problems. That means that students reflected on their mistakes. In the interview after completing online tasks they noted that it became easier for them to deal with such tasks.

2.3 Results of the Experimental Work

The presentation of the results of our pedagogical experiment, organized in the natural conditions of the South Ural State University, includes the analysis of the data obtained during the final assessment and the dynamics in improving students' reading skills.

Let us analyze the obtained results. Preliminary and final assessments were carried out. The results of the preliminary assessment are detailed in the first paragraph of this chapter.

During the final assessment students were given different texts and tasks to them from B1 Preliminary Test. The main aim of the final assessment was to see whether students had improved their reading skills. So, the final assessment showed the following results (Figure 13).

The results of the final assessment showed that students completed the tasks better. The average result is 26 points (out of 35) which is equal to 74 percent. The average or lower results showed 5 students. If we compare the average results of the preliminary and final assessments we will see that no students have the result of 21 points or lower which we observed during the preliminary assessment.

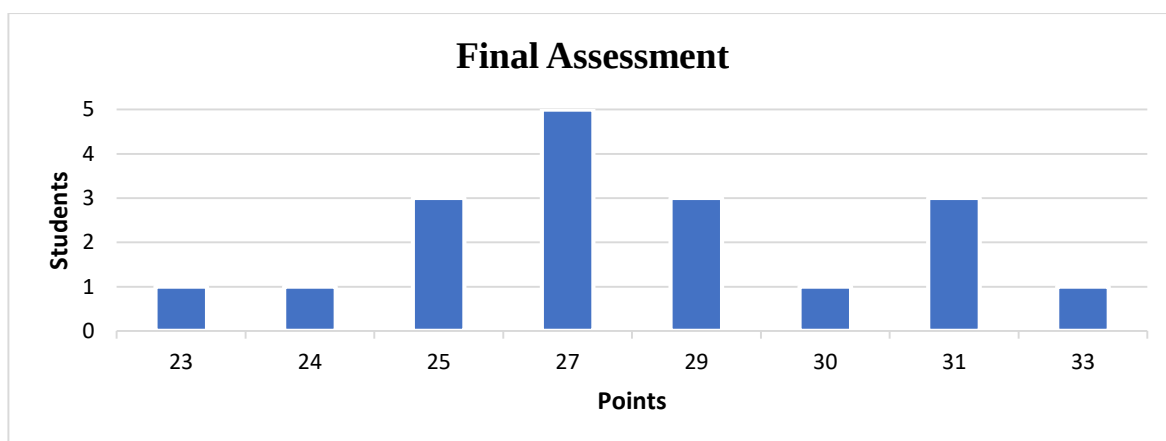


Figure 13. Results of the final reading skills assessment

Let us compare the results of these two assessments.

Table 1 shows the results each student has at the beginning and the end of the experiment.

Student	Beginning of the experiment	End of the experiment
1	29	30
2	7	25
3	16	25
4	20	29
5	21	29
6	16	27
7	24	31
8	23	31
9	21	23
10	30	31
11	23	27
12	32	33
13	13	27
14	18	27
15	13	24
16	21	27
17	24	29
18	25	25

Table 1. Comparative results of each student during the experiment

Table 2 shows the values of the statistical t-Student criterion method to determine significant differences at the beginning and end of the experiment within the group participating in the pedagogical experiment.

Groups to be compared	Received Result	Table value for significance level	
		0,01	0,05
Group (at the beginning) – the same group at the end of the experiment	5,9	2,9	2,11

Table 2. Values of the t-Student criterion

The obtained values of the t-Student criterion statistics showed that there are significant differences within the group at the beginning and end of the experiment.

Figure 14 shows the comparison of preliminary and final assessments results.

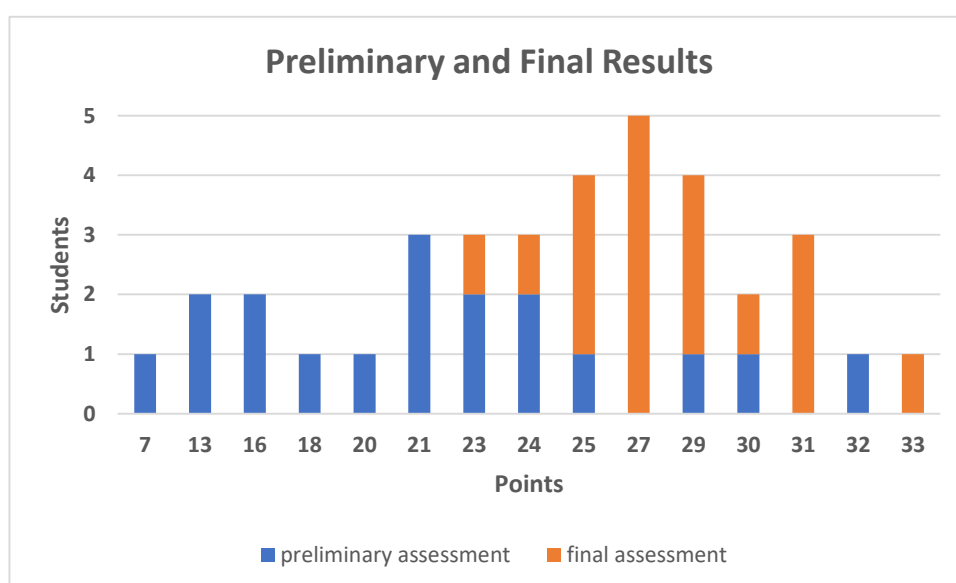


Figure 14. Results of the preliminary and final reading skills assessment

The comparison of results shows that at the final stage of the experiment students perform better than at the preliminary one.

At the preliminary assessment we see poor results (less than 60 percent – less than 21 points out of 35), while at the final one we do not see such results at all – all participants receive higher points.

The lowest result of the preliminary assessment is 7 points – this is only 20 percent of the task completed.

The lowest result of the final assessment is 23 points – this result is higher than an average result (21 points) at the preliminary assessment.

The average result of the final assessment is 26 points. The vast majority of students (15 out of 18) do not receive it at the preliminary assessment, while more than 80 percent of students (15 out of 18) receive the results higher than the average one at the final assessment.

Only 3 students out of 18 (less than 17 percent) receive results higher than 60 percent for the completed task at the preliminary assessment, while at the final one there are 100 percent of them.

Good results (75-84 percent for the completed task – 27-30 points) receive 11 students at the final assessment and only 2 out of 18 at the preliminary one.

Excellent results (more than 85 percent for the task completed – 31-35 points) get 4 students at the final assessment and 1 student at the preliminary one.

These results give us some reasons to claim that they are obtained thanks to the model we have created, well-chosen texts, developed exercises and an electronic course designed on the Moodle platform. Also, we can say that the results demonstrate our model's effectiveness in teaching and enhancing students' reading skills.

We think that the reason the students' outcomes have improved is because while working with different types of texts and exercises they have learnt new vocabulary, revised grammar, developed various reading strategies. All this has led to the improved in reading skills.

Results

These results show the most significant aspects that have been reached in the practical chapter.

The stating stage of the experiment revealed an insufficient level of reading skills development which required us to develop and implement a model of the process of its development.

The aim of the experiment is to verify our model of the process of university students reading skills' development.

The formative stage of the experiment confirmed that reading skills are developed quite effectively within the framework of the model we have created.

CONCLUSION

Blended learning is one of the most recent tendencies that our educational environment faces. It is the most effective way of learning compared with simple classroom teaching and remote online learning. Teaching reading in blended learning environment is one of the important issues because one of the ways of receiving information is through printed or in an electronic format texts. The survey we conducted among 1st and 2nd year students of South Ural State University showed that not all students like to read but they have to do it in order to get ready for lessons; and most of them use gadgets for reading.

In the first chapter we clarified the concepts of blended learning and reading, as well as created the model of the process of university students reading skills' development.

The second chapter is devoted to the experimental work on teaching reading in blended learning. The aim was to verify the model we created.

The model consists of three units – motivational, modeling and evaluation-corrective – which are implemented through a determinant and operational components.

The motivational unit is connected with students' motivational sphere and performs the following functions: motivates and stimulates students' educational and cognitive activity; has an impact on the student's personality; encourages the need for self-education and improvement.

Modeling unit focuses on implementing of the state educational standard in the field of a foreign language and training different reading skills necessary and important for better comprehending various types of texts.

The evaluation-corrective unit serves to determine the degree of compliance of the obtained results with the desired ones and to eliminate the identified shortcomings.

The results of our pedagogical experiment show that reading skills have improved. Thus, the study we conducted shows the significance of the model we developed, texts we selected, and exercises we created.

In the future research, it is possible to choose texts and develop a set of exercises for the development of reading skills at a more advanced level of English language proficiency.

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APPENDIX 1. Questionnaire

Q1: Do you like reading?

Q2: How often do you read?

Q2: When you read, how much time do you spend?

Q3: How do you usually read (using paper books or/and e-books)?

Q4: What do you usually read?

Q5: Can you say that reading is your hobby?

Q6: What is the purpose of your reading?

Q7: Do you think it is necessary to read in foreign languages?

APPENDIX 2. Texts and Exercises for Face-to-Face Activities

The whitest white paint

(From: [BBC Learning English - Lingohack / The whitest white paint](#))

Cool, heat-reflecting white rooms are already an urban climate solution that's been **embraced** in cities around the world.

In New York, more than 10 million square feet [929,000 square meters] of rooves have been coated with white heat-reflecting paint.

But these scientists say their ULTRA-white paint could make those rooves even cooler.

While the whitest currently available paints reflect between 80 and 90 per cent of sunlight, these researchers say theirs reflect more than 98 per cent.

Covering a 1,000 square foot [92.9 square metre] roof with this paint, they **estimate**, would provide more cooling power than a typical central air conditioner.

Prof **Xiulin** **Ruan,** **Purdue** **University**

Every one per cent of reflectance that you get will translate to 10 watts per metre squared less heating from the Sun. So, basically, it provides cooling of 18 kilowatts. That's really a big deal. That's more than a typical air conditioner does for a house with the same kind of space.

The secret to its **formulation** also makes it **relatively** cheap to produce: the scientists used high concentrations of a compound called barium sulphate, that's already used to make paper.

Back in 2014, another group of scientists developed the blackest possible black coating, a material called 'Vantablack', that absorbs so much light it makes every surface look almost invisibly flat.

And one museum in the US now wants to put these two **breakthroughs** side-by-side, displaying the whitest possible white alongside the blackest black.

Pre-reading exercises

1. Answer the questions below.

- a) What color is your house?
- b) Which colors do you know?
- c) Which color is your favorite?
- d) If you had the chance to choose the color of your room what color would it be?

2. Work with a partner. Discuss the questions below.

- a) Which parts of a house can be painted white?
- b) Does the white color reflect the sun's rays if it is painted on the roofs of the houses?
- c. Do you think black has the same properties as white? Why / why not?

2. Read the words aloud paying attention to their pronunciation: harsh, to persuade, to pretend, belongings, although, snug.

3. Match the words to their definitions.

1) embrace	a) creation of something
2) formulation	b) accept a new idea
3) estimate	c) sudden or important discovery
4) relatively	d) guess; predict
5) breakthrough	e) in comparison

4. Skim the text. What type of text is it? Suggest a title for it.

While-reading exercises

Read the text and answer the questions.

- a) Are white rooms really adopted as a climate solution and why?
- b) Scientists say that ULTRA-white paint could make surfaces cooler. What do you think about that? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- c) Why is the paint cheap to produce?

After reading exercises

Work with a partner. Discuss the questions below.

- a) Why do scientists like to run experiments?

- b) Do you think that the color of the paint has an effect on the rise and fall of temperatures?
- c) Do you think that scientists will be able to find solutions to important problems that directly affect our lives? Give examples.

Healthcare robots

(From: [BBC Learning English - Lingohack / Healthcare robots](#))

Physiotherapy – robot style. Could this be the long-term future of some NHS [National Health Service in the UK] care? Here at Southmead Hospital in Bristol [UK], they're experimenting with a robot programmed to interact with patients for simple forms of physio. Another possible use might be basic bedside checks.

Robot: Remember not to take your medication on an empty stomach. Use for real is still some way off, but hospital leaders think this could help ease workforce pressure.

Dr Tim Whittlestone, Deputy Medical Director, Southmead Hospital: Everyone understands that people want more out of healthcare as they live longer. We have not enough workforce to deliver those demands, and of course, robotics and technology can be taught to do mundane, repeat menial tasks. The hospital is working with the Bristol Robotics Laboratory, looking at future care of patients in their own homes. This device can be controlled remotely to help with basic household tasks. Technology can clearly help those who need assistance at home, but might people feel they lose out from lack of human contact?

Professor Praminda Caleb-Solly, Bristol Robotics Laboratory: In no way are we looking to replace people, because I myself wouldn't want that. So, I wouldn't want to think about that as a possibility for anyone else. The idea here is to augment and improve the care provision and the quality of care that can be provided. And away from patients, there's automation. Robotic portering delivers most supplies around the hospital, including to operating theatres and meals for the wards. They even have their own lifts. Because they do the heavy manual work, staff injuries have been reduced. Robot technology is also at work in the hospital

pharmacy. Orders for medicines are processed rapidly and made ready for clinical teams. Pharmacists say it improves patient safety by eliminating human error.

Hugh Pym, BBC Health Editor: Whether they're moving supplies around hospitals or having direct contact with patients, robotic devices are thought to offer potentially major long-term benefits to the NHS. But there are big questions over what that will mean for patients' experiences and the impact on staff.

Helen Stokes Lampard, Chair, Academy of Medical Royal Colleges: I'm excited about the increased use of technology in care homes, but also throughout the NHS. There's tremendous potential there. But of course, as a scientist, I want to see the evidence too. I want to make sure that things are safe, that they are effective, and there are no unexpected side effects or consequences. They won't necessarily offer cups of tea or even look like this. But the fact that hospital leaders are working with engineers on robotics, shows there is a radical vision for post-pandemic health and care.

Pre-reading exercises

1. Answer the questions.

- a. What is a robot?
- b. Could robots be the best choice for us in the future?
- c. What do you know about the robots in medicine?
- d. What is physiotherapy?

2. Match the words with their meaning.

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| 1) menial tasks | a) increase value; make better |
| 2) assistance | b) boring, low-skilled jobs |
| 3) augment | c) prepared for use |
| 4) portering | d) help |
| 5) made ready | e) carrying, transporting |

3. Skim the text. What type of text is it?

4. Read the text and suggest a title for it.

While-reading exercises

1. Answer the questions.

- a. What has been reduced by using robots to do heavy manual work?
- b. What robots can be taught to do?
- c. What is the main idea of using robots?
- d. How can robots be used in the hospital pharmacy?

After reading exercises

Discuss the following questions with your partner.

- a. Might people feel they lose out from lack of human contact if there are a lot of robots everywhere?
- b. Can people be replaced by robots?
- c. Would you like to have a robot at home?
- d. Would you like to be cured by a robot?

Future-proofing Stonehenge

(From: [BBC Learning English - Lingohack / Future-proofing Stonehenge](#))

Metal scaffolding may be an incongruous sight next to the ancient structure, and it will be taken down every evening over the next few weeks – such is the determination to keep Stonehenge open and looking as normal as possible. This conservation work is in itself historic. The last time something of this scale was undertaken was more than 60 years ago, when the ladders were wooden, you could smoke a pipe while working and protective headgear was a woolly hat. Much has changed over the decades, but the problems remain.

Heather Sebire, English Heritage

One of the lintels, for example, was stitched together in the 1950s. So, we're going to be doing some repair work to that because at the time they used a mortar that was very hard, and we're going to replace that with lime mortar. Repairing, restoring, conserving. There are subtle differences, and at this World Heritage site

– everything is tightly controlled. After all, they are working in the footsteps of giants.

John Maguire, BBC reporter

Now they may not have used phrases like ‘structural engineer’ or ‘architect’ four and a half thousand years ago, but they were very clever people. On top of each pillar there’s a tenon joint – it’s that bit of rock that you can see sticking up. They would go inside this mortise hole, so the lintels would have sat on top of the pillars. We think this one was never actually placed on top of the pillar. We don’t know why. As with so much in Stonehenge, it remains a mystery. With our changing climate, English Heritage is aware that the stones will face different weather patterns. So, the hope is to future-proof the work for at least the next sixty, seventy, maybe a hundred years.

Pre-reading exercises

1. Work with a partner. Discuss the questions below.

- 1) What do we mean by restoration and construction?
- 2) Can we build beautiful cities in the coming years?
- 3) What ancient buildings or places do you know?
- 4) What materials did people use in ancient times?

2. Use the following words to complete the sentences below: scaffolding, protective headgear, lintels, mortar, pillar

- 1) ... is vertical column that supports part of a building.
- 2) ... is a mixture of sand, water and other materials used to join bricks or stones.
- 3) The word “...” describes horizontal bars placed across the top of a door or window.
- 4) ... is an item such as a hard hat, used to avoid injury to the head in risky situations.
- 5) ... is a temporary structure used outside buildings during repairs.

3. Read the topic sentences below. Work with a partner and discuss what you think the rest of each paragraph will be about.

4. Skim the text. What type of text is it?

While-reading exercises

Answer the following questions.

- a. Why is metal scaffolding an incongruous sight?
- b. Why is the conservation work of the Stonehenge historic?
- c. What material are builders going to use and why?
- d. Why does Stonehenge still remains a mystery?

After reading exercises

Discuss with a partner possible reasons for the statement below.

“With our changing climate, English Heritage is aware that the stones will face different weather patterns. So, the hope is to future-proof the work.”

The Quantum Revolution

(From: [BBC Learning English - Lingohack / The Quantum Revolution](#))

So much modern technology already relies on light. But there's still more potential locked away in these beams. In a lab in Cambridge, this team says it's working on the next ‘light revolution’.

Dr Carmen Palacios-Berraquero, Nu-Quantum

First, we had lamps, then we had lasers, which completely revolutionised our lives and our technology, and now we may be at the **cusp** of the third stage in the history of light. We have single photon sources – devices that can emit one particle of light at a time. And that is the key here – being able to separate off those individual light particles. I’ll explain why that’s important in a second, but first, here’s how they do it.

Richard Westcott, BBC Journalist

On this disc here – you can't see it – is a crystal that is one atom thick, and it's got little **defects** on it – the size of an atom. And when you fire a laser at those defects, they ping out individual photons – individual particles of light. And you can

actually see them here – these bright yellow areas are the defects where the photons are coming out. This is where it gets weird. By singling out photons, you can unlock what's known as the 'quantum world', where very, very small things behave very differently. You'll need to pay attention to this bit.

Dr Carmen Palacios-Berraquero, Nu-Quantum

So there are two main properties that we can **harness**. The first one is 'super position' and the second one is "entanglement". "Super position" is a particle being in two states at the same time – so being up and down at the same time. "Entanglement" – is two particles being **inextricably** linked. So, no matter where they are in the Universe – whatever happens to one affects the other one. So, say one is up - the other one has to be down – or the other way around. When we put two... these two effects together, we can build something like a quantum computer – which is orders of magnitude more powerful than anything we can compute today. Carmen's tech singles out the photons. You then need Matthew's sensors to detect them. So what about practical uses? The quantum world is the only place you can generate a genuinely random number. So the team's now building a 'quantum random number generator' to encrypt things securely online.

Dr Matthew Applegate, Nu-Quantum

We are at the start of the quantum revolution, if you like – this is going to be like the Industrial Revolution we believe. What we've done is develop room-temperature components which are much simpler than the current state of the art – which will unlock the great potential of quantum technologies.

From next level computing to better cameras – more accurate clocks, and a more secure internet – the surreal quantum world is hard to **grasp**, but the benefits are simple.

Pre-reading exercises

1. **Read the words carefully: cusp, inextricably, grasp, quantum, harness, defects.**
2. **Work with a partner. Discuss the statements below.**

- a) Light is an important element in our modern life.
- b) Modern technology is one of the components of our lives.
- c) Our life developments are linked to the concept of revolution.

3. Match the words with their meaning.

- 1) cusp a) to control something to use its power
- 2) defects b) in a way that is impossible to separate
- 3) harness c) understand; comprehend
- 4) inextricably d) on the edge of or very close to
- 5) grasp e) faults; problems

4. Skim the text. What type of text is it? Give the title to the text.

While-reading exercises

- a. What is quantum revolution?
- b. What can you do by picking photons?
- c. What is super position?
- d. What is entanglement?

After reading exercises

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- a. Much of modern technology does not really depend on light.
- b. The technology revolution has brought nothing to our lives.
- c. Light is not important in our lives. We can live without it.