

University "St Kliment Ohridski" - Bitola
Faculty of Education - Bitola



TEACHER
International journal

University “St. Kliment Ohridski”
Faculty of Education – Bitola

TEACHER

International journal

Bitola, 2013

Publisher

Faculty of Education - Bitola

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CIP - Cataloging in Publication,
National and University Library "St. Kliment Ohridski" - Skopje.

TEACHER: Journal of the Faculty of Education - Bitola /
[Editorial Board Acad. Grozdanka Gojkov ...] Year XII, No. 2 (2013) -
- Bitola: Faculty of Education, 2013 -. - 29 cm., 315 p.

Unspecified

ISSN 1857- 8888

University "St. Kliment Ohridski" - Bitola, Macedonia
Faculty of Education - Bitola, Macedonia

Address:
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Ul — Vasko karangelevskil b.b.
7000 Bitola, Macedonia
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With the opinion of the Ministry of Culture no. 07-2699/2 from 15.04.1998, for the journal "Teacher" is paid preferential tax rate. In accordance with Article 20, paragraph 8 of the VAT Law (Official Gazette 44/99), for the journal "Teacher" is paid a tax of 5%.

The journal has no commercial nature.

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PHYSIOLOGICAL BASES OF READING¹⁰⁰

Abstract

Reading process contains a number of synchronized activities. These activities are performed automated, and because it is difficult to analyze only by simple observation. Physiology of reading explains the work of us all anatomic-physiological structures which condition the reading process. In the cerebral cortex (cortex) are a center that manage and interpret human behavior, ie the ability to read is based on the complex structure and processes of the cerebral cortex. Reading is associated with nerve center nodes with sensor-motor center for hearing, vision, voluntary eye movement, head movement and the neural pathways that lead to certain structures in the cerebral cortex, where it allows the reading process. To date, of all structures, is best explored the work of the organs of sight.

Organ-eyes are of special importance for reading. It is significant scientific discovery Zhaval (Javal, 1878)¹⁰¹ indicating that the eyes along the lines do not move evenly and consistently, but the kind of leaps or "сакaдо" movements that are separated by fiksacioni breaks (chart no. 14). This means that reading takes place when the eyes are suspended when fixated. With the help of the experiment is found that fixation accounted for 90%, and the movement of the eyes of 10% of the time. These data need to realize tentatively because of poor readers will need more time to fixation of how trained readers are.

Keywords: reading, speech, written word, oral interpretation, and communication.

PHYSIOLOGICAL BASES OF READING

The learning process consists of number of synchronized activities. These activities are done automatically and that is actually the reason that makes it difficult to analyse just by observing. The physiology of the reading explains to us the work of the all anatomically-physiological structures that condition the process of reading. In the core of the brain (the cerebral cortex) are the centers that command and interpret the human behaviour, which means that the ability to read is based upon a complex structure and the processes in the brain. The center for reading is connected with the nerve center nodes in the sensory-motor center for hearing, vision and free eye movements, movements with the head and the nerve ways that lead to certain structures in the cerebral cortex where the process of reading is being enabled. To this day the best researched part is the work of the organs for vision.

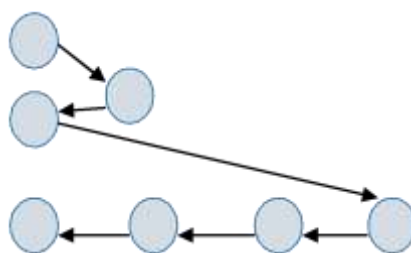
The organs of vision or sight, the eyes have a special importance in reading. The scientific discovery of Javal is very important. It shows that the eyes do not move evenly and consistently along the rows, but they move with jumps or saccadic movements that are separated with fixation pauses (graphic view no.12). This means that the reading takes place when the eyes are resting, and are fixed. It was confirmed through an experiment that the

¹⁰⁰ Specialized paper

¹⁰¹ Wade,N., Tatler, B. (2003): *The moving tablet of the eye: the origins of modern eye movement research*, Oxford University Press, pp. 115-135.

fixation takes 90% of the time and the movement of the eyes takes 10%. These findings must not be taken exactly like that, because the weak readers would need more time for fixation than the trained readers.

The researches made by Lidija Pavlovik and Robert Vudford and published in the book “Experimental psychology”¹⁰² show that the factors for longer fixation during reading are: unusual word, word used with other meaning than its usual one, ambiguous sentences that do not fit well in the context or an unnecessary word in a sentence. They also showed the researches of Bazvel (1920), who studied the distance between the eye and the voice between the words and he concluded that it is not a constant quantity. If during the reading emerges a difficult fixation, as a result of the above stated causes, the distance goes to zero and the eyes do not move until the meaning of the word is discovered.



Graphic view 1: saccadic eye movements during reading

If during reading the eyes move back toward the part that has been already read, than we say that regressive movements have appeared, which are also conditioned with certain difficulties. The number of regressions depends on how understandable the text is and on the speed of understanding what has been read. The beginners have five regressions during reading, but for

the trained readers the regression may appear in an uninteresting text or if they are not interested in the text. Every letter does not need to be in the center of the sight in order to be read. There is reading for the trained readers even when they are indirectly looking and during automatic fulfilment of a certain picture of words. The known words is not necessary to be seen until their end, but we will be able to read them. If the text is meaningful. The fixation increases and the regression is to minimum, but that is connected with the intelligence of the reader. The experiments that were held, show that children can fixate a text longer 10-15mm, but the adults even 25mm. The number of fixation changes depending on the level of scientific reading and depending on the quality of the text. If the student faces a difficulty in understanding the text or if the text is interesting, than he has to slow the movement of the eyes, the eyes have to keep the speed with slow motion or with holding up during every look¹⁰³. The eyes move more quickly than the voice, and because of that reading the words aloud slows the reading process, and this is the reason why reading aloud is more slowly than reading silently.

The teacher has to know the physiological mechanisms of reading, in order to be able to easily identify the negative and the positive emergences during the reading and at the same time to help them, to teach the students how to learn the modern techniques of proper reading¹⁰⁴.

¹⁰² Woodford S.R., Pavlovic, L., (1964): *Ekspperimentalna psihologija*, Beograd, Naučna knjiga.

¹⁰³ Ambiguity during reading (the explanation of this process is still based on assumptions) are because of the organ of seeing – the eye. The speech as the oldest invention of civilization is perfected, and a person can simultaneously talk, eat... but it's not the same with the eye. It is impossible to read and look at certain objects at the same time. This is “a more new discovery of evolution” and the eye is less adapted to its new role.

¹⁰⁴ Цветковић, Т. (2003); *Методика српског језика*; Учитељски факултет, Сомбор, стр.40.

Table 1. Exercises for checking and enlarging of the eyesight range (according to Makoj)

Exercises for the sight (measuring the range)	Exercises for enlarging the sight range
To stop the look in the middle of a text	A light is being turned on and off alternatively in a room. This exercise aims to straighten the muscles of the eye which enlarge its pupil.
To fortify the words which are seen clearly and to count the places of the letters in them!	To read a certain text in two ways: a) Pointing with a finger along the row where we read (shortening the eyesight range), b) Making an effort to cover more words with one look. After this exercise, we can immediately notice the difference in the speed of reading.
To fortify which words are seen partially and to count the places of the letters in them!	
What do you notice (partially) on the edge of the clear field ?	

PSYCHOLOGICAL BASIS OF READING

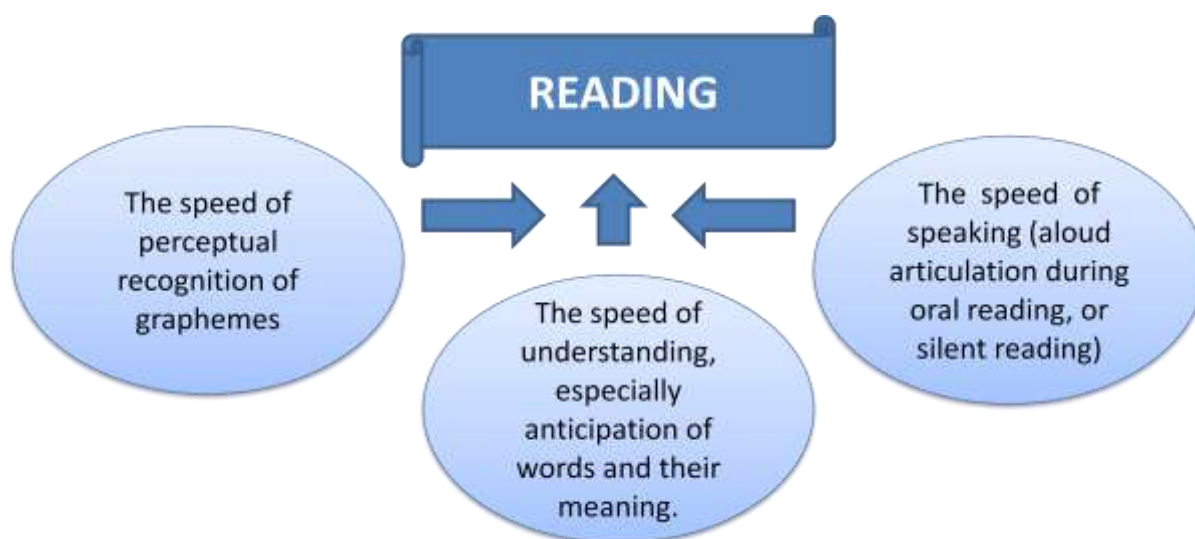
We should always keep in mind the fact that when the child starts going to school is actually one of the most important stages in life, because a lot of major changes occur in its psyche, which are important for its maturing and its formation as a whole person. This is complex process and because of that special attention has been paid to it since the antic Greeks to the time of the modern teachers of methodology.

The reading is a process whose aim is to understand the sense of the written words, or to understand the thoughts that were expressed through the words. Reading means making a connection between the written (printed) speech and the oral speech and their meaning. The oral and the written speech differ in their origin, complexity and structure. The oral speech emerges in the beginning of the second year of every person's life, but the written speech emerges between the fifth and the eighth year. I've mentioned several times that the speech is congenital mysterious power, which every child learns until the third year. The written word is not congenital. It is being learned through reading and is more abstract than the oral speech, because in the oral speech the child uses its experience, life events, mimics, gestures

and other characteristics of the oral speech. In the written speech the child is in front of a barrier of written words and the relations between them, because the words appear as symbols of the voices and in combination with them, they symbolize objects, entities and abstract ideas.

The process of reading differs between the beginner and the trained reader. The trained reader has optic envision of the written words as an elements. This process of analysis and synthesis is done automatically, and that is why the trained readers do not pay attention to the reading as a process, but they only pay attention to the sense of what they are reading. The process of reading of students that are beginners consists of certain phases and is long and progressive.

I have mentioned previously a very important researches of Vudvord and Pavlovik in the field of experimental psychology, related to reading as a complex process. The speed of reading with understanding is the best pointer in the advanced reading. Their researches fortified that the common speed of reading is influenced by the following factors:



Graphic view 2. Factors that determine reading

The results from this research points to the fact that the reading is in a major correlation with intelligence, but it's not in a correlation with the hearing abd the monitoring abilities. As a result of this, it is necessary for the teacher to get to know the level od speech development of the child, because the intelligence is one of the most important factors in reading and learning.

The adult period of a student as concerns the learning and reading is heterogeneous, so that some children with learning and writing can start from their third year, but the intensive learning to read starts from the fifth to the seventh year. According to Vuk Milatovik, the psychological basics of reading can be observed in two ways:

1. In a way of the developmental psychology and the question that asks when will be the child able to start learning to read concerning its abilities and maturity.
2. In a way of the problematic connection to certain mental activities as thinking and speaking.

The modern psychology and methodology of the Macedonian language aspire to understand better the factors that determine the slow or fast reading of a text, and that influence if the text is easily or hard to understand.

The school and the other competent institutions would have to examine the different abilities of the student that are important for learning how to read, with the help of the

teachers. In this way they will get adequate data of the qualification of the student in the first grades for learning to read and write. This help may be various:

a) Collaborating with the sanitary service to examine the visual acuity and the acuity of hearing.

b) Despite of the tests for intelligence, the psychologist in the school needs to do a test of the laterality (left-handed, right-handed) in children.

c) The teacher must examine the precognition (the literacy) of the children that start going to school, which is actually a routine of our teachers. For this it is necessary for them to be well qualified and to help them with the methods and the ways through which an easier and more flexible realization of the aims would be accomplished.

Since the needed information is supplied, then the children that need help are gathered. With some exercises that are suitable (with help from a speech therapist, psychologist, pedagogue and doctor), all of the educational institutions need to differentiate the approach towards these children in order to accomplish more easily an optimal success in reading and writing.

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