

## ON PRACTICE-ORIENTED ASPECTS OF TEACHING HOME READING TO UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN ENGLISH CLASSES

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### Abstract

The article analyzes and describes the personal experience of university foreign language (English) teachers and suggests effective pedagogical approaches, methods and techniques of working with aspects of home reading in order to increase their practical significance. Home reading as a type of practice-oriented activity in foreign language classes has long played a secondary role and occupied a subordinate position in relation to analytical reading and speaking practice. A set of new tasks and assignments has not yet led to noticeable changes in methodology of teaching home reading and, thus, has not improved the effectiveness of students' training of practical language skills. The purpose of this article is to identify and prove the need to change attitudes and approaches to home reading and to propose new methods and techniques for their realization. The authors describe different educational strategies for working with foreign language literary texts in home reading classes with students at the initial stage of their studies at the Faculty of Foreign Languages. These strategies can ensure that home reading will provide more effective foreign language acquisition and help build and develop various valuable components of communicative competence. Such approach seems to be quite effective, as it allows focusing on the most important aspects of work with literary texts and at the same time to cover all types of reading and speaking activities, using a variety of methods and forms of language practice. The integrative and comprehensive nature of home reading activities can significantly increase the potential of students' learning motives and make a significant contribution to the scope of their communicative skills and competencies, which are the main goals of teaching a foreign language. Home reading classes in this regard are aimed at solving the following objectives: expansion of active vocabulary as the basis of language proficiency; enhancement of students' spontaneous and situational speech skills with the use of selected active vocabulary, authentic patterns and samples; and development of students' correct communication modes and speech styles. The following factors may also contribute to the successful implementation of the methodology proposed in this study; they include: integration of predetermined content that meets students' cognitive needs and language abilities, increases students' motivation to read and discuss a literary work, ensures their effective independent work on the text, and promotes the development of initiative and speech activity in the class; determination of clear directions of activity reflected in certain strategic stages of work with literary texts in home reading classes for junior students of the Faculty of foreign languages; and employment of a variety of methods, techniques and forms of teaching and learning based on an individual approach that will meet the learning needs of students, stimulate their creativity and active engagement in classroom activities. The proposed methodology was tested in the course of the pedagogical experience with the second-year students of the specialty "Pedagogical education with two training profiles: foreign language and social studies" of Kazan (Volga region) Federal University, and confirmed its effectiveness. This article will be of interest to foreign language teachers, educators, methodologists and researchers dealing with complex problems of improving the quality of modern higher education.

**Keywords:** university, students, foreign language, English class, home reading, teaching, methodology.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The reason for this study is that home reading is one of the most important aspects of language acquisition at university, including, in particular, reading original fiction books in the language being studied or taught (also known as the target language). Regular practice of such activities contributes to the development of literacy, building oral and written language skills, enriching students' vocabulary, bridging cultures, literature and nations, and fostering analytical and critical thinking (Farrell, 2009; Golenko, 2014). Based on our personal experience of teaching a foreign language in higher school, we can say that the process of proper organization of home reading in English classes can serve as the main source and tool in learning a foreign language and mastering communicative competence for interaction both in and out of the academic environment (Kapustina & Goyushova, 2024). Thus, reading books in foreign languages allows not only to transform the process of learning a foreign language into a fascinating activity, but also helps students to immerse themselves in the authentic atmosphere of the other country and get acquainted with the modern realities of the country of the target language in full (Rastegar et al., 2017). Although home reading has always been considered an integral part of the language acquisition process, this type of activity has long played a secondary role and occupied a subordinate position in relation to analytical reading and speaking practice (Silawi et al., 2020). Today, in the changing world, with the abundance of information flows, there is a need to reconsider the status and approaches to home reading teaching methodology at university in order to improve the effectiveness of students' learning of practical language skills (Kizrina & Eliseeva, 2022).

The importance of home reading for the full acquisition of foreign languages can hardly be overestimated. Although reading original fiction books usually begins as early as middle school, university students rarely demonstrate sufficient skills to perform new practice-oriented tasks and assignments. Thus, this creates a gap between critical reading and practical skills and limits students' ability to analyze, summarize, retell, and respond appropriately when communicating ideas from the books (Oo & Habók, 2021). This makes the integration of home reading instruction a necessary and valuable linguistic aspect in the educational process at university. At least three arguments come to mind in assessing its importance, namely, 1) students come into contact with modern living language, not with its conventionally educational version; 2) there is an opportunity to work autonomously and independently with the text, to express their opinions and evaluate the work, characters and situations; and 3) it allows to create new images and develop personal perception and creative abilities, using the five human senses: touch, sight, hearing, smell and taste (Kiseleva, 2017). In addition, home reading plays a crucial role in motivating, stimulating and enhancing students' readiness to communicate orally and in writing without barriers in the context of contemporary realities, as exposure to reading improves students' language skills and helps to overcome psychological limitations and obstacles especially in the times of change (Barnett, 1988; Berardo, 2006; Tziviniou, 2021). So, it is high time to revise home reading lessons and turn them into an integral, equal component of the whole foreign language teaching process, starting from the initial stage of study at the faculty of foreign languages at university.

Studies conducted in the last decade in a number of countries have shown that people who read a lot and read thoughtfully, are able to think problematically, grasp the situation in its entirety and identify contradictory interrelationships of phenomena, as well as to give the most adequate assessment of the problem and quickly find the right solutions. In short, reading forms, among other things, the most demanded professional (hard) skills and extra-professional (soft) skills and qualities of a developed and socially relevant personality (Kuklina, 2016; Temelman-Yogev et al., 2024). All of the above benefits raise a few controversial questions. For example, why has home reading long played a secondary role and taken a subordinate position to analytical reading and speaking practice? Why did the set of previously recommended tasks and assignments never lead to noticeable changes in the methodology of teaching home reading? Why didn't these tasks and assignments enhance students' learning of practical language skills through home reading? The purpose of this article is to answer these questions, identify and prove the need to change attitudes and approaches to home reading and propose new methods and techniques for their realization. Drawing on their own experience and the best practices of their colleagues, the authors describe various educational strategies and methods for working with foreign language fiction texts in home reading classes. The target audience is represented by students of Kazan Federal University at the initial stage of study at the Faculty of Foreign Languages, where home reading is included in the educational program as a compulsory academic subject. The study also took into account the specificity of the multilingual educational environment of a modern university (Trenkic & Warmington, 2019), which is becoming the norm in recent years due to the intensification of migration processes and academic mobility between universities from all over the world.

Teachers may have to make extra efforts to integrate all students into the learning process and at the same time reduce the difference between local and foreign students when assessing their learning outcomes. Home reading classes can serve as a basis for building common sociocultural norms in studying the target language, as well as incorporating mindset, analytical and critical thinking without distinction of nationality.

## **2 METHODOLOGY**

In order to achieve the set objectives and to confirm the relevance of our study, we collected, studied, analyzed and summarized various theoretical materials and practical sources of information on methodology, psychology and pedagogy concerning aspects of foreign language teaching and related four basic language skills (listening, writing, speaking and reading) (Grellet, 1981; Fathman, 1985; Block, 1992; Janzen, 1996; Golenko, 2014; Moon & Kwan, 2022). The following approaches and methods were mainly used in the course of the research: the theoretical approach – helped to analyze the literature on pedagogy, psychology and foreign language teaching methodology (Kuklina, 2016; Temelman-Yogev et al., 2024; Moon & Kwan, 2022); the empirical approach – allowed to conduct observation, questionnaires, comparison of best pedagogical practices in Russia and abroad (Jian & Ko, 2017; Zheltukhina, 2021; Zemskova & Odinokova, 2022); the experimental-theoretical approach was used to conduct and describe the pedagogical experiment and provide conclusions. In the process of the study, the authors also used the system-structural approach, which allows analyzing different types of teachers' pedagogical activities, their experience and successes in the process of preparing and conducting home reading classes for their students (Berardo, 2006; Kiseleva, 2017). Benchmarking (assessments to match students to standards and learning goals) and observations of student achievements helped to assess students' progress toward the end goals and identify their strengths and weaknesses, which can then inform their future instruction (Silawi, 2020; Temelman-Yogev et al., 2024).

## **3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

It was determined that in recent years, researchers have explored the importance of universal cognitive strategies that students should use when reading fiction (or literary) books during their university studies. Despite the fact that home reading has long had a limited status as a practice-oriented activity in foreign language acquisition and, as such, has played a secondary role and occupied a subordinate position to analytical reading and speaking practice in academic programs, the need to revise approaches and methods of teaching is now becoming evident (Shmigareva, 2023; Kapustina & Goyushova, 2024). The modern era, conditioned by the processes of globalization, integration, internationalization and digitalization, defines foreign languages as the best means and tool for information transfer and communication, multicultural and multilingual interaction that allow availability of various channels and technologies for dynamic international communication and cooperation (Trenkic & Warmington, 2019). We proceed from the fact that home reading classes are language activities that contribute to the development of the student's personality with universal cognitive skills, analytical and critical thinking, developed speech and discursive skills, which in interaction prepare future specialists for intercultural communication with peers and partners from other countries, ready for scientific exchange and solution of actual problems of modern times (Trenkic & Warmington, 2019).

The organization of effective home reading classes within foreign language acquisition at university depends on several factors, the most important of which are: motivation to learn, prior language knowledge, learning environment, best teaching strategies, student personality, clear instruction, convenient learning modes, appropriate course materials (literary works), continuous teachers' support and feedback 24/7 (Oo & Habók, 2021). The use of literary texts in foreign language classroom as a course material is no longer obligatory (Atmaca & Günday, 2016). The technologically advanced learning environment today expands the list of course materials from authentic paper books such as novels, magazines, newspapers, poems, etc. to online resources such as articles from the web-sites, audio-visual authentic documents, etc. Similarly, different objectives of language acquisition can be resolved through home reading tasks and assignments: developing language and sub-language skills, for example, in speech, grammar, vocabulary, active listening, summarizing, paraphrasing, responding, etc. (Atmaca & Günday, 2016; Rastegar et al., 2017; Tzivinikou et al, 2021; Shmigareva, 2023). The reasons why foreign language teachers use literary texts in foreign language classes may also vary; the originality or authenticity of the material, its cultural richness, linguistic features or stylistic differences, and the specific course material may motivate students to actively participate in the proposed activity (Atmaca & Günday, 2016; Kiseleva, 2017; Kizrina & Eliseeva, 2022). In addition, the factors that require the use of literary texts in foreign language classes may be different, for example, they may contain authentic cultural and motivational material; allow the development of intensive and general reading skills; enhance students' creativity; possess cultural and linguistic richness; ensure active participation and communication among students; develop students' analytical skills and critical thinking; promote the development of the four basic language skills and sub-skills; support the development of emotional intelligence, etc. (Atmaca & Günday, 2016; Kiseleva, 2017; Kizrina & Eliseeva, 2022). Teaching

strategies depend on the language class, teachers, students, specific context, expected outcomes, etc. and can be a combination of several strategies adapted to the needs of individual learners. Thus, teaching strategies can range from traditional grammar-translation (GTM) and direct methods to cooperative language learning (CLL), task-based language teaching (TBLT), communicative language teaching (CLT), etc.

The organization of home reading classes based on the above opportunities can ensure that home reading will provide more effective foreign language acquisition and help build and develop various valuable skills and competences. The integrative and comprehensive nature of home reading activities can significantly increase the potential of students' learning motives and make a significant contribution to the scope of their communicative skills and competencies, which are the main goals of teaching a foreign language. Such an approach seems to be quite effective, as it allows focusing on the most important aspects of work with literary texts and, at the same time, covering all types of reading, speaking, listening and writing activities, using a variety of strategies, methods and forms of language practice (Berardo, 2006; Tzivinikou et. al., 2021; Shmigareva, 2023). Home reading classes in this regard are aimed at solving the following objectives: expansion of active vocabulary as the basis of language proficiency; enhancement of students' spontaneous and situational speech skills with the use of selected active vocabulary, authentic patterns and samples; and development of students' correct communication modes and speech styles (Block, 1992; Jian & Ko, 2017).

The following factors may also contribute to the successful implementation of the methodology proposed in this study; they include: integration of predetermined content that meets students' cognitive needs and language abilities, increases students' motivation to read and discuss a literary work, ensures their effective independent work on the text, and promotes the development of initiative and speech activity in the class (Oo & Habók, 2021). The description of the directions of activity is clearly reflected in certain strategic stages of work with fiction (literary) texts in home reading classes designed for junior students of the Faculty of Foreign Languages of Kazan federal university. The proposed methodology was tested in the course of the pedagogical experience with the second-year students of the speciality "Pedagogical education with two training profiles: foreign language and social studies" and has proven to be effective and reliable. The five stages as productive components of home reading activities include: selection and dosage of reading material; selection and dosage of active vocabulary; frequency of home reading classes; vocabulary activation and development of spontaneous speech skills. Let's look at each of the steps in more detail.

1. *Dosage of reading material.* Since the goal of home reading is not just familiarization with the content of the book and the author's style, but expanding the active and passive vocabulary of students and developing their situational and spontaneous speech skills, the works taken for home reading should not just be read but carefully studied. Hence there is a need for the correct dosage of home reading assignments (Rastegar et al., 2017; Shmigareva L.O. (2023). During the dominance of the Aspect Method, emphasis was placed on the number of pages read. Unreasonably large homework assignments (up to 100 pages per week in senior courses) excluded any possibility of deep study of the material. Even with cursory reading, a student needs at least an hour for every ten pages of text, so to read 100 pages, one must spend at least 10 hours per week, or about 2 hours per day (Barnett, 1988; Block, 1992; Kiseleva, 2017). Having large assignments in other subjects and other aspects of the language studies, students were not always able to allocate two hours daily for home reading. Moreover, being constantly overloaded, students, as a rule, did not regularly read the literature pieces but prepared for home reading lessons only the day before, skimming the part of the book that they had to read during the week (Janzen, 1996). At the same time, due to the lack of time, students often turned to the corresponding Russian translation, since they knew from experience that they would only be required to retell the content without the obligatory use of expressions from the original or preserving the author's language (Kiseleva, 2017; Kizrina & Eliseeva, 2022). A practical focus in the study of foreign languages requires a reduction in the number of weekly pages for home reading. Experience shows that a student of average ability can really productively study about 30 pages of the original per week, i.e., approximately 5 pages per day. Only with such a quantity of studied material can one achieve active mastery of the selected vocabulary and the development of situational and spontaneous speech skills on its basis.

2. *Selection and dosage of active vocabulary.* As mentioned above, one of the main tasks of home reading is the expansion of students' active vocabulary, mainly through words and expressions of the "literary" style of speech, i.e., those that go beyond everyday vocabulary (Barnett, 1988; Block, 1992; Kiseleva, 2017). The active vocabulary should include only the most important words and expressions from the point of view of communication, the ones that are widely used in the language, denote ideas and concepts that often function in speech. In addition, the active vocabulary should be sufficiently idiomatic, i.e. it should include not so many isolated words, but rather a set of phrases and even idioms (Oo & Habók, 2021). They help students understand the features of the target foreign language more quickly and deeply. In addition, linguistic clichés are reproduced in speech more easily than free phrases, and this is of great importance for the development of students' fluent speech skills (Berardo, 2006; Shmigareva, 2023). As for individual words, they should be

studied and activated mainly on the basis of special texts for analytical reading. But individual words can also be included into the active vocabulary for home reading. These can be words that are often found in literary exposition, for example, "exaggerate", "underestimate", and the like, or everyday words, but used in a metaphorical meaning, for example, the verb "rest" in the sentence: "his reputation as a horsey man rested mainly on the fact that..." (Grellet, 1981; Shmigareva, 2023). Let's also focus on synonyms and synonymous expressions that can also be included in students' active vocabulary (Grellet, 1981; Shmigareva, 2023). It is the knowledge of several synonyms that contributes to the most free and natural flow of conversation. The speaker is less likely to find himself in a situation where he has to remember a single word that he knows to express some concept and which, for some psychological reason, has suddenly fallen out of his consciousness. If a student knows, for example, two expressions – "to suppress one's feelings" or "to subdue one's feelings" – there are more chances that at the right moment one of them will be, so to speak, "at hand" (Farrell, 2009). It is important to determine not only the qualitative composition of the active vocabulary but also its volume. Practice shows that a student can successfully learn about 30-40 words and expressions per week. Thus, during the 3rd and 4th years of study, the total number of active words for home reading for most of the students will constitute approximately 1500-2000 (Grellet, 1981; Farrell, 2009).

3. *Frequency of home reading lessons.* Reducing the number of pages read and emphasizing active vocabulary are only prerequisites for a more solid learning experience, but they do not in themselves guarantee success: special efforts are required for these prerequisites to lead to the desired results (Moon & Kwan, 2022). First of all, it is necessary to eliminate periodicity in preparing students for home reading. Even reducing the number of pages to 30 per week will not have the desired effect if a student prepares for a home reading lesson only the day before: it will take about 3 hours to read 30 pages. To those 3 hours, you need to add another hour, or perhaps more, for vocabulary learning and activation (Silawi et al., 2020). In this way of preparing for home reading, one cannot expect good results, much less require students to imitate the author's style when retelling and discussing the book. In this case, the active vocabulary is also poorly mastered (Silawi et al., 2020; Moon & Kwan, 2022). To avoid such an instance, it is necessary to conduct home reading not once but twice or even three times a week. Increasing the frequency of lessons and home reading will, firstly, make students work more regularly on home reading material, and secondly, will help to assimilate and train vocabulary more deeply and develop spontaneous speech skills more successfully, since this reduces the amount of material studied (in each individual lesson) and increases the time for its activation. When conducting home reading lessons three times a day, two-hour lessons are not at all necessary in each case – out of three lessons per week, it is enough to conduct one two-hour lesson (to discuss problematic issues, conduct a discussion, interpret difficult parts of the text, etc.) and two lessons of one hour each (activation of vocabulary, retelling the text, etc.). Such two-three times a day home reading lessons quickly accustom the student to regular, systematic work on the educational material of home reading and have a positive effect on the quality of its assimilation (Silawi et al., 2020; Moon & Kwan, 2022).

4. *Vocabulary activation.* The vocabulary allocated by the teacher for active learning should be consolidated (at lessons and during independent work) through repeated repetition in the speech of students, for which various methods and techniques of activation are used, such as retelling the text, composing situations, dialogues, discussions, etc. The retelling of text content continues to be one of the means of activation of home reading material, but it should be used not so much to check the knowledge of the content of reading, but as a means of activating vocabulary. From the very first lessons, students should be given the following instruction: the answer can be satisfactory only if the active expressions found in the passage are used in the retelling in parallel with a certain number of expressions chosen by the student at his/her discretion (Moon & Kwan, 2022). The so-called detailed retellings of the text should have a greater specific weight. The teacher selects small passages of text (1-2 pages) that are valuable in linguistic terms (idiomatic language, simplicity of grammatical structures, emotionality, etc.), which students must retell closely to the text. Such regular, detailed retellings of the text teach students to imitate the language of the work (Zheltukhina et al., 2021). Exercises for composing situations with the inclusion of certain expressions in them are very effective as a means of activating vocabulary (Shmigareva, 2023). The following type of work is also close to the situation: the student, at his own discretion, selects a passage from a read or unfamiliar text of one page in length and, retelling it, uses appropriate active words and expressions. This type of work should be done at home (it requires a significant amount of time) with subsequent checking in the classroom (Zheltukhina et al., 2021). It is very useful to regularly practice dialogues with the obligatory use of certain active expressions. At the same time, one must be careful with respect to the stylistic characteristics of the expression, excluding words of the "high" style from the dialogues. Dialogues, as well as situations, are mainly a classroom type of work. To activate vocabulary outside of speech situations, the following exercises can be done: a) the teacher gives students the core words of expressions, by which they must restore the expressions as a whole. For example, the word "pry" is given, by which the student restores the expression "to pry into one's affairs"; b) students systematize the vocabulary by the thematic or synonymous feature, for example, students are

asked to recall all expressions associated with the designation of feelings and experiences. In this case, it is assumed that such expressions as "to subdue one's anger"; "to check oneself"; "to get over one's temper", etc. will be named (Barnett, 1988; Tziviniou et al., 2021; Zheltukhina et al., 2021; Shmigareva, 2023).

5. *Development of spontaneous speech skills.* Spontaneous speaking skills in home reading lessons are most naturally developed through conversations or discussions about the content or problems of a book. These are not discussions organized, facilitated, and directed by the teacher. The most effective discussions are those that are supported from beginning to end by the students themselves. Such conversation lessons should be preceded by preparatory work to make these conversations natural and free (Golenko, 2014; Oo & Habók, 2021). First of all, students are given a number of linking and introductory words and sentences necessary to keep the conversation flowing freely, e.g. "I say look here; do you mean to say...; excuse me but...; forgive my interrupting you...; that's just it; I hold a different view; to begin with...; secondly...; it's not convincing; you are getting off the point; this is exactly what I was going to say; no denying it", etc. After that, students begin to use linking phrases in a free conversation. At first, only two students participate in the conversation, then the number of participants in the conversation gradually increases until there is a moment when the discussion becomes a shared one (Golenko, 2014; Oo & Habók, 2021). The role of the teacher is mainly to energize the students, not to allow individual students to shy away from the conversation, and to make sure that all students in the group participate equally in the discussion (Golenko, 2014; Oo & Habók, 2021). When the conversation begins to fade, the instructor's task is to keep the discussion going by offering students a new problem. And here it is necessary to achieve a situation when students themselves keep the conversation lively (Golenko, 2014; Oo & Habók, 2021). During conversation lessons, the teacher makes sure that students use their active vocabulary by pointing out at the right moment where it is comfortable and natural to use a particular active expression (Golenko, 2014; Oo & Habók, 2021).

It becomes obvious that in all kinds of work on texts or vocabulary, in order to focus students' attention on the activated material, it is useful to ask them to write down the words and expressions they use (in retelling, in dialogue situations, in conversation, etc.) in the form of an individual glossary and then discuss them in monologue, dialogue or polylogue. In this way of conducting the lesson, students' attention is not distracted and they involuntarily repeat active vocabulary over and over again (Golenko, 2014; Oo & Habók, 2021). Some of the techniques and methods suggested in this article for working on home reading to increase its practical value are not the only ones possible, but their effectiveness has been proven by our practice over several years. Formation and development of universal learning actions (based on cognitive readiness) in students at different stages of foreign language learning within the framework of home reading organization, undoubtedly contributes to a solid and effective mastery of foreign languages and metacognitive skills (Rastegar et al., 2017). In addition, home reading increases students' interest in foreign-language texts, contributes to the formation of intercultural and multilingual environment, and fiction (literary) materials make learning process exciting, authentic and relaxed, because, even though the perception of guidelines depends mostly on independent and autonomous activity of students, the need for cognitive activity is also preserved.

#### **4 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The conducted research has led to the conclusion that foreign language learning with its many aspects contributes to the development of practice-oriented language skills, promotes cultural diversity and multilingualism in education, and develops an understanding of other cultures, literatures and traditions. The article is devoted to such an important aspect of foreign language learning as home reading and its role in the formation of students' speech skills in a foreign language; the necessity of understanding foreign cultures and traditions is also discussed in detail. The authors clarified the concept of home reading and gave a generalized description of the types of texts used for it, as well as assignments based on the reading and aimed at discussion after the completion of reading. The authors also described various educational strategies for working with foreign-language fiction (literary) texts in home reading classes with university students at the initial stage of study at the faculty of foreign languages. These strategies define the use of a variety of methods, techniques and forms of teaching and learning based on an individual approach to meet students' learning needs, stimulate their creativity and active involvement in classroom activities, which is a very necessary skill for proper interaction in a globalized international academic environment and beyond.

We compared the previous experience, when in the times of the dominance of the so-called Aspect Method in teaching foreign languages, oral language skills were developed mainly at the lessons of conversational practice. Students were given special, as a rule, thematic vocabulary, which was then consolidated in dialogues, conversations, situations on a given narrow topic (Grellet, 1981; Barnett, 1988; Block, 1992; Janzen, 1996). This method had a number of disadvantages, of which the following should be noted. Firstly, students spoke only in the speaking practice classes, while in other classes free natural communication was not possible; thus, students seemed to encounter a certain psychological barrier, which they often could not

overcome (Golenko, 2014; Kiseleva, 2017; Moon & Kwan, 2022). Secondly, active vocabulary was given thematically and was therefore specific and narrow; it limited students' ability to have truly free conversations by confining them to certain topics outside of which students felt insecure and helpless. Thirdly, home reading as a type of work on language played a secondary role, being in a subordinate position in relation to analytical reading and speaking practice. Home reading did not serve the purpose of expanding the active vocabulary of students, in most cases it was reduced to retelling the content of reading in a rather primitive language. If some words and expressions from the home reading book were used, it was occasional use (Golenko, 2014; Kiseleva, 2017; Tzivnikou et al., 2021; Moon & Kwan, 2022). Later, transition to the aspect-free method of teaching foreign languages made it possible to equalize home reading with other types of language work (Kizrina & Eliseeva, 2022; Moon & Kwan, 2022; Temelman-Yogev et al., 2024). But to this day many teachers, declaring the rejection of the Aspect Method of teaching, repeat in their practical work all the mistakes generated by that outdated method. They continue to view home reading only as a means of expanding students' passive, rather than active practice-oriented vocabulary (Kuklina, 2016; Kiseleva, 2017).

Based on this, we concluded that home reading classes should pursue the following updated goals: expansion of active vocabulary as a basis for fluency; development of students' spontaneous and situational speech skills on the basis of active vocabulary; improvement of students' correct speech style depending on the setting and context. It was suggested that the complication of assignments in senior courses should follow the line of deepening the content of the issues discussed and introducing literary analysis. On this basis, it is necessary to include one of the most important types of oral speech – an oral unprepared speech activity – in academic foreign language programs at university. The best effect can be achieved if any home reading work has a positive influence on the natural motivation of speech acts during discussions, and we have found that the discussion of moral and ethical problems (e.g., criteria of good and evil, virtue and vice; the meaning of life and the purpose of man; freedom of will and religion; directives and desirability, etc.) is of great interest to students. Theoretical significance of the study lies in the enrichment of ideas about the effectiveness of the process of organizing practice-oriented home reading classes and the presentation of new step-by-step pedagogical strategies aimed at the formation of communicative competence of university students on the materials of home reading lessons in the new conditions caused by globalization, integration, internationalization and digitalization. The practical value of the work lies in the publication of a textbook based on authentic fiction (literary) material with step-by-step instructions and exercises and aimed at the formation of communicative competence of students in home reading classes at university and beyond.

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