



## **USING NARROW READING TO DEVELOP READING SKILLS IN THE MEDICAL PROFESSION**

Shuhratbek Aribjonov Sharobiddinovich

Deputy Director for Academic Affairs of the Academic Lyceum of Andijan Medical  
Institute, Andijan, Uzbekistan

Pazilova Nasibakhon Muxammadkasimovna

Candidate of Philological Sciences of Foreign language and literature (English)  
Department, Andijan State University, Andijan, Uzbekistan

Turdibekova Zulfiya Muxammadkasimovna

Teacher of Andijan State University, Andijan, Uzbekistan

### **Abstract**

This article reveals the using narrow reading for developing reading skills, tackling as well paramount aspects related to the nature of reading and the factors affecting reading comprehension. This paper reveals the manual proposed for the development of reading skills in the medical profession, describing in details the teaching methodology and the rationale underlying the design and implementation of the referred manual; the selection of the reading texts, of the reading skills and of the tasks to develop such skills and subskills; the explanation of how such reading subskills, texts and tasks overlap in terms of logical sequence; and the provision of teaching guidelines in the framework of the teaching approach opted for.

**Keywords:** narrow reading, reading, academic reading skills and subskills, development of reading skills, English for academic purposes, medical English.

### **Introduction**

Reading is an activity often taken for granted by most people and seen as a passive, receptive language skill, whose place in language teaching is often neglected. The context of this study, where most English lessons and materials are grammar-based, sometimes with attempts to focus on speaking, but where reading practices are almost nonexistent. In the rare cases where reading activities are performed, they rely on reading aloud and purely literal questions, rather than silent reading, inferring and evaluative questions, which are more academic. In general terms, reading is conceived





of as a process that involves not only recognizing words in print but also of making sense of them, through the application of specific strategies and techniques. Actually, for scholars such as medical students, who are required to cope with scientific articles and other text types with a certain degree of complexity and vocabulary load, developing effective reading comprehension skills is of utmost importance. English is of utmost importance to students of Medicine. Medical students need English so they can cope with authentic medical texts, which are mainly written in English; to read overseas news and medical practices, and to develop basic research skills or do research tasks during their academic studies. They also need English to respond to demands of their profession, such as reading instructions for dosage administration, drugs, and for working tools, which are also mostly written in English.

### **The Teaching Methodology**

The methodology upon which the manual is designed is Narrow Reading. Narrow Reading is, as discussed in the literature review, a teaching concept based on the idea that the acquisition of both structure and vocabulary comes from many exposures in a comprehensible context. It is a way of developing reading comprehension skills since its premise focuses on reading different text genres around the same topic, whereby learners, thus facilitating their approach to those texts, supposedly more easily acquire recurrent vocabulary. The main reason for selecting this teaching method lies in the fact that from the needs analysis it was noticed learners face a lot of difficulty in reading academic medical texts in English due to lack of background knowledge of medical vocabulary. These difficulties are believed to be addressed with narrow reading, as can be seen in the follow-up tasks of sample lesson one.

Narrow reading is relevant to this research context, which is composed of mixed ability learners, since it enables for a multi-level task design. For example, the same task could focus on the same text be used to develop the same reading skills but with different degrees of complexity: for the lower-level learners a simple task that requires identifying the meaning of a technical term, and for more advanced learners using recurrent vocabulary to establish comparisons or performing more complex reading comprehension tasks for those learners who are more advanced. Therefore, in the belief that reading comprehension becomes easier where the same topic is explored in different text genres, a set of three different text genres all about **blood pressure** were selected, and each genre consists of two to three texts, selected on the basis of level of difficulty and the specific reading (sub)skill to develop.





## **Materials**

The selection of texts should bear in mind the interest of the students and a number of factors: openness, level of difficulty, availability, comparability, ability to create interest in the learner, text length, and its relevance to the course syllabus.

Considering these factors, a decision was taken to select three different text genres on the topic blood pressure, for a few reasons. First of all, blood pressure is one of the subjects in medical practice and taking blood pressure is the commonest thing doctors and nurses do before diagnosing a certain illness, prescribing a medicine or recommending a medical test/clinical analysis. Second because blood pressure is the first unit of the course book English through Medicine 1, currently in use at the Faculty of Medicine in Uzbekistan for the Medical English, under the title hypertension.

The texts were sequenced in this way in the belief that the first ones are easier to read and have a less complex structure, enabling learners to build up specialized vocabulary and develop basic reading skills, such as scanning to locate specific information, or skimming to establish the gist of the texts. The texts on the explanatory genre are all based on simple explanations of what blood pressure is, how it occurs, which symptoms patients have when they have low or high blood pressure, and simple facts about the causes and consequences of low and high blood pressure. The texts of the instructional genre are more complex than the explanatory ones and are all based on statistical information and techniques on how to take blood pressure, how to interpret the numbers in taking blood pressure, factors to bear in mind in taking and interpreting results from blood pressure measuring.

## **Discussion**

The structure of the proposed manual is an original design with roots from the Macmillan Skilful Series for Academic English. The manual maintains the study focus, which is developing reading skills, at the same time it also attempts to integrate writing and speaking mini-tasks as the output of the reading process. Each lesson comprises of six sections: reading texts, reading skills and subskills, key vocabulary work, reading tasks, writing and/or speaking tasks and assessment. Shaping this sequence of stages, one sample lesson plans was is designed demonstrating each of these six sections and the principle of narrow reading into action. There is at the end a short booklet with notes for teachers, explaining how they should orient and engage the learners in each of the stages. Since it is a simple demonstration, the manual





contains three units only, each of which corresponding to one of the three text genres presented above.

Concerning the articulation of the manual with the current English syllabus, the meeting point is the realization of the syllabus guidelines in the new manual in a more focused and context-based way, especially concerning focus on reading. The content sequence in the course books being used are adapted and the topics in the syllabus are considered, but with new texts. The skills focus has been rearranged, keeping the syllabus orientation to cover speaking and writing, but prioritizing reading. Since this manual aims to adapt and improve the existing syllabus, teachers are advised to follow the sample lessons provided in the manual and adapt the remaining units, keeping focus on developing reading, in the framework of Narrow Reading.

## **Conclusion**

This paper explored the nature of reading and how the process of reading and reading comprehension works. A case study was conducted at the Faculty of Medicine with the aim of understanding the English teaching and learning context, with special regard to how the materials and methodology in use contribute to the development of reading skills. A needs analysis was carried out by interviewing the teachers and the learners. The course curriculum, teaching syllabuses, programs and materials currently in use were evaluated and the conclusion reached is that despite having the English subject for 5 years throughout their curriculum, the learners in that specific context do not find their needs and difficulties addressed. They need to develop reading skills to fulfil their academic and professional goals, but the learning materials and practices they are exposed to do not contribute significantly to meeting these needs, since the syllabus centralises the teaching focus on the development of speaking skills.

## **References**

1. Cohen, Loius; Manilon, Lawrence; and Morrison, Keith. *Research Methods in Education*, 5<sup>th</sup> edn. London: Routledge Falmer, 2000. Print.
2. Council of Europe. *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment*.
3. Conti, Gianfranco. "Eight narrow reading techniques that will enhance your students' vocabulary and reading skills"





4. Davis, F. B. "Research in comprehension in reading." *Reading Research Quarterly*, 3, 1968: 499-545. Print.
5. Dudley-Evans, Tony and St John, Maggi Jo. *Developments in English for Specific Purposes: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach*. Cambridge: CUP, 1998.

