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LINGUOCOGNITIVE FOUNDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING ENGLISH TEXT COMPREHENSION COMPETENCE

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ABSTRACT. This article theoretically examines the linguocognitive foundations for developing English text comprehension competence. Text comprehension is understood not merely as grasping the meanings of linguistic units, but as a complex process involving learners' cognitive activity, prior knowledge, memory, attention, logical reasoning, inferencing, and effective use of metacognitive strategies. Vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, morphological awareness, working memory, and higher-order cognitive skills are important factors in reading English texts. Recent studies indicate that L2 reading comprehension develops through the interaction of linguistic and cognitive factors (Vettori et al., 2024). It is also argued that instruction based on principles of cognitive linguistics can promote a deeper understanding of language units through conceptualization, schemas, semantic associations, context, and imagery (Liu & Qin, 2024). The article discusses the linguistic, cognitive, semantic, and metacognitive aspects of English text comprehension and substantiates opportunities for developing reading competence through the integration of these components. The findings may provide a theoretical and methodological basis for designing comprehension-focused tasks, developing learners' analytical and critical thinking, and fostering independent reading.

Keywords: English, text comprehension, reading competence, linguocognitive approach, cognitive processes, linguistic knowledge, semantic analysis, inference, metacognition, critical thinking.

INTRODUCTION. In the context of globalization and the rapid development of information and communication technologies, proficiency in English has become an important factor in expanding an individual's academic, professional, and communicative opportunities. The ability to use English-language academic, educational, and informational sources independently is particularly important in modern education. Learners therefore need not only to read English texts, but also to understand them deeply, distinguish main from secondary information, identify logical and semantic relationships, and apply the information gained in new situations. Developing English text comprehension competence is consequently a significant research and methodological issue in contemporary foreign-language education (Council of Europe, 2020; OECD, 2023).

English text comprehension is a complex, multicomponent activity involving both linguistic knowledge and cognitive processes. While reading, learners identify word meanings, process

grammatical and syntactic structures, establish semantic links between sentences, activate prior knowledge, identify important information, and infer meanings that are not explicitly stated. Reading comprehension therefore cannot be explained simply as decoding linguistic units; it should be regarded as a linguocognitive process arising from the integration of language and thought (Vettori et al., 2024). Contemporary research shows that comprehension in a second or foreign language is associated with vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, morphological awareness, working memory, attention control, and metacognitive knowledge. A systematic review of L2 English reading comprehension indicates that, alongside vocabulary, morphological knowledge, and working memory, higher-order cognitive and self-regulatory processes are also important. Linguistic and cognitive factors should thus be studied as an interconnected system rather than separately (Vettori et al., 2024). From a linguocognitive perspective, language is inseparable from human cognition. Readers do not process words and sentences mechanically; they connect them with prior knowledge, experience, context, and existing conceptual representations. As a result, they construct not only the surface meaning of a text but also its conceptual and pragmatic meaning. Developing text comprehension therefore requires the development of learners' language knowledge, conceptual thinking, and ability to construct meaning (Council of Europe, 2020; Vettori et al., 2024).

The relevance of the study. One important cognitive mechanism in comprehension is inferencing. Since not all information is expressed explicitly, readers must use linguistic cues to identify implicit meaning, reconstruct cause-and-effect relationships, infer the author's purpose, and draw conclusions. Such higher-order thinking is particularly important when reading academic and scientific texts. English lessons should therefore include not only reproductive questions such as "What does the text say?" but also cognitively demanding questions such as "What does the author mean?", "What evidence supports this conclusion?", and "How could this idea be applied in another situation?" (OECD, 2023; Vettori et al., 2024). Metacognitive processes also play a significant role. Setting a purpose before reading, monitoring comprehension while reading, identifying unclear passages, and evaluating the outcome afterwards can improve reading effectiveness. Conscious use of metacognitive strategies enables learners to select strategies appropriate to different texts and tasks. Developing strategic and independent reading should therefore be an important methodological objective (Mekuria et al., 2024). Today, learners encounter English texts not only in print but also as online articles, web pages, digital textbooks, infographics, tables, and other multimodal sources. Working with these materials requires additional cognitive skills, including locating information quickly, comparing sources, evaluating reliability, and identifying relationships among different components. Text comprehension is thus directly connected with information literacy and independent learning (OECD, 2023). Investigating the development of English text comprehension through the interaction of linguistic and cognitive processes is therefore important. This approach supports not only vocabulary and grammar development, but also analytical thinking, inferencing, information processing, critical evaluation, and independent regulation of reading. Identifying linguocognitive foundations and applying them

in education provides a theoretical basis for effective teaching methodology (Vettori et al., 2024; Council of Europe, 2020).

MAIN BODY. English text comprehension competence is a complex competence formed through the integration of linguistic knowledge and cognitive activity. While reading, learners recognize lexical items and understand their meanings, process grammatical structures, identify semantic relationships between sentences, connect the overall meaning with their existing knowledge, and attempt to understand meanings that the author has not stated directly. Comprehension should therefore be viewed not merely as linguistic decoding, but as a complex interaction among language, thought, memory, attention, and knowledge (Vettori et al., 2024). The linguocognitive approach studies language in close connection with human cognition. When processing a text, readers relate linguistic units to their experience, conceptual knowledge, context, and communicative situation. They reconstruct the meaning of the text within their existing knowledge system. A systematic review of 62 empirical studies on language pedagogy based on cognitive-linguistic principles also highlights the pedagogical potential of cognitive-linguistic approaches to second-language learning (Liu & Qin, 2024). Lexical competence is the first major linguistic foundation of comprehension. If learners do not understand the meanings of key words, it becomes difficult to reconstruct relationships between sentences and paragraphs. Effective reading, however, requires not only a large vocabulary but also the ability to determine a word's meaning in a particular context. Reading instruction should therefore go beyond memorizing isolated words and include tasks that examine their contextual, semantic, and functional characteristics (Vettori et al., 2024).

Grammatical and syntactic knowledge is another important linguistic component of text comprehension. Complex sentences, subordinate clauses, tense forms, modal expressions, pronouns, conjunctions, and other grammatical devices signal relationships between ideas. Correctly interpreting forms that express cause, contrast, condition, result, or time helps learners follow the logical development of the author's argument. Grammatical competence is therefore not an isolated skill, but a component that supports semantic and cognitive processing (Vettori et al., 2024). Activating prior knowledge is another linguocognitive mechanism. While reading a new text, learners connect its content with their previous experience, knowledge, and conceptual understanding. For example, existing knowledge of ecology, education, technology, or professional activity can help them understand related texts more quickly and deeply. Comprehension is thus not simply the reception of new information; it involves creating semantic links between new and existing knowledge (Liu & Qin, 2024).

Working memory is another important cognitive component. During reading, learners must temporarily retain the meaning of an earlier sentence or idea and connect it with subsequent information. Long and complex English texts place considerable demands on working memory because readers must maintain relationships between sentences, preserve the main idea, and integrate new information with what they have already read. Systematic research on L2 reading comprehension likewise demonstrates the importance of working memory and other cognitive factors (Vettori et al., 2024). Inferencing is particularly important in comprehension. It is the

process by which readers identify or conclude information not explicitly stated in a text by drawing on evidence, context, and prior knowledge. An author's attitude, the cause of an event, or its likely development may not be directly stated. Readers must connect pieces of information and draw logical conclusions. Inferential questions and problem-based tasks in English reading lessons can therefore develop higher-order thinking (OECD, 2023; Vettori et al., 2024). Semantic analysis is another important linguocognitive mechanism. It enables learners to move from the meanings of individual words to the overall meaning of a text, distinguish the main idea from secondary information, identify cause-and-effect and comparison relationships, and determine the author's position. Both local meaning at sentence level and global meaning across the text need to be constructed. Reading tasks should consequently move beyond asking "What does this word mean?" to asking "What role does this word or idea play in the overall meaning of the text?" (Vettori et al., 2024).

Metacognitive activity is an essential component of English text comprehension and refers to learners' ability to understand and manage their own reading process. It includes planning, monitoring comprehension, selecting strategies, and evaluating the final outcome. A systematic review published in 2024 reported positive effects of metacognitive reading strategies on the development of English reading ability, with particular attention to problem-solving strategies (Kan et al., 2024).

The practical use of metacognitive strategies enables learners to move from passive reception of a text to active reading. Effective strategies include predicting content from the title and structure before reading, marking main ideas and identifying unclear passages while reading, and summarizing information and evaluating one's comprehension afterwards. Research involving EFL learners has also examined the use of global, problem-solving, and support reading strategies (Suharni et al., 2024). The combination of cognitive and metacognitive strategies is especially important for deep comprehension. Cognitive strategies help learners process, summarize, predict, question, and visualize information, while metacognitive strategies help them plan and monitor these processes. It is therefore more effective to use these strategies together as a coherent reading system rather than separately. A study involving EFL students found significant improvements in strategy use and critical reading after explicit instruction in reading strategies (Mekuria et al., 2024). Context is also methodologically important in a linguocognitive approach. The same lexical item may have different meanings or functions in different contexts. Learners should therefore study words and grammatical forms not only through dictionaries and rules but also by analyzing their use in authentic texts. Cognitive-linguistic pedagogies similarly emphasize understanding conceptual relationships between linguistic forms and meanings (Liu & Qin, 2024). Critical thinking represents a higher level of linguocognitive processing in English text comprehension. Learners should evaluate the logic and evidential basis of information, the author's position, and its consistency with other sources rather than simply accepting the text. This develops their ability to work independently with information, distinguish evidence from conclusions, compare perspectives, and express justified opinions. Critical reading can therefore be regarded as one of the higher-level outcomes of English text comprehension (Mekuria et al., 2024; OECD, 2023). A linguocognitive

model of English text comprehension comprises several interconnected components. The first level consists of lexical and grammatical knowledge; the second, semantic and syntactic processing; the third, activation of prior knowledge and inferencing; and the highest level, metacognitive monitoring, critical evaluation, and independent conclusion-drawing. Integrating these components enables learners not only to understand English texts but also to acquire new knowledge and apply information in other communicative situations (Vettori et al., 2024; Kan et al., 2024). Teaching methodology should develop learners' linguistic knowledge and cognitive abilities in parallel. When pre-reading preparation, strategic activity during reading, and post-reading analytical and reflective tasks are organized coherently, learners become more effective in working with texts. Prediction, questioning, identifying the main idea, deriving meaning from context, summarizing, evaluating evidence, and supporting opinions all contribute to the development of linguocognitive competence (Mekuria et al., 2024; Kan et al., 2024).

METHODOLOGICAL ANALYSIS AND RESULTS. When analyzing methods for developing English text comprehension competence, it is important to consider the relationship among the purpose of reading, the linguistic characteristics of the text, and learners' cognitive abilities. An effective reading process should go beyond simply reading a text and include predicting its content, identifying key information, reconstructing semantic relationships, making inferences, and monitoring comprehension. This approach turns reading into active cognitive activity and enables deeper understanding (OECD, 2023; Vettori et al., 2024). The methodological analysis indicates that development can appropriately be organized in three stages: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading. At the first stage, learners' prior knowledge is activated, predictions about the topic and content are made, and new vocabulary is introduced. At the second stage, learners complete tasks focused on distinguishing main and secondary information, identifying keywords, understanding contextual meaning, and making inferences. At the third stage, they summarize the text, formulate conclusions, and respond critically to the information presented (Mekuria et al., 2024). The main purpose of pre-reading is to activate prior knowledge and prepare learners cognitively to receive the text. Possible techniques include analyzing the title, predicting content from pictures or keywords, and conducting a brief question-and-answer activity about the topic. These activities help learners form an initial conceptual model and connect new information with existing knowledge. Language pedagogy based on cognitive linguistics also identifies conceptualization and linking new language material to existing knowledge as important factors in effective learning (Liu & Qin, 2024).

Using inferential tasks while reading can help develop higher-level reading comprehension. Questions such as "What can be inferred from the text?", "Why does the author mention this?", "What does the author imply?", and "What evidence supports this idea?" encourage learners to identify meanings that are not directly stated. Such tasks help them connect facts, draw evidence-based conclusions, and understand the author's position rather than merely remember individual details (OECD, 2023; Vettori et al., 2024). At the post-reading stage, assessment should consider not only how well learners understood the text, but also their ability to process the information and create new meaning from it. Suitable tasks include summarizing the text, expressing its main idea

in a few sentences, creating a conceptual map, responding to the author's argument, evaluating evidence, and applying information to another situation. These activities help learners move from reproductive reading to productive and critical reading (Mekuria et al., 2024).

The analysis indicates that the combination of cognitive and metacognitive strategies is particularly important in developing English text comprehension competence. Cognitive strategies include directly processing information through categorization, summarizing, prediction, identifying the main idea, and drawing conclusions. Metacognitive strategies enable learners to plan these activities, monitor their understanding, and evaluate the outcome. Research on explicit reading-strategy instruction shows that this approach can improve strategic and critical reading skills (Mekuria et al., 2024; Kan et al., 2024). Vocabulary teaching methods should also be reconsidered. While traditional approaches focus primarily on memorizing new words, a linguocognitive approach also examines a word's function in the text, contextual meaning, synonymic and antonymic relationships, and semantic connections with other items. Learners thus acquire words as parts of a meaning system rather than as isolated units, strengthening the contribution of vocabulary knowledge to overall comprehension (Vettori et al., 2024). Critical-reading tasks are important for developing advanced text comprehension. Instead of accepting statements as unquestionable facts, learners should identify the author's evidence, distinguish opinions from facts, evaluate the sufficiency of arguments, and consider alternative perspectives. Discussion, evidence evaluation, identification of the author's position, and the development of alternative conclusions encourage higher-order cognitive activity (OECD, 2023; Mekuria et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION. The theoretical and methodological analysis shows that English text comprehension competence is complex, multicomponent, and integrative. Its development is not limited to acquiring vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. It depends on the interaction of linguistic and cognitive processes, including understanding information, identifying semantic and syntactic relationships, activating prior knowledge, making inferences, understanding the author's position, critically evaluating information, and forming conclusions (Vettori et al., 2024; OECD, 2023). The findings indicate that linguistic and cognitive components should not be studied separately when examining English text comprehension. Vocabulary, grammar, and understanding syntactic structures provide the necessary linguistic foundation for reading, while working memory, attention, activation of prior knowledge, logical reasoning, and inferencing enable this knowledge to be used in practice. It is therefore advisable to develop linguistic knowledge and cognitive processes in parallel in English-language education (Vettori et al., 2024). The integration of cognitive and metacognitive strategies was found to be an important condition for developing English text comprehension. Cognitive strategies support information processing, comparison, summarizing, and drawing conclusions, whereas metacognitive strategies strengthen learners' ability to plan, monitor, and evaluate their reading. Education should therefore teach not only the content of texts but also strategies that answer the question, "How can one read effectively?" (Kan et al., 2024; Mekuria et al., 2024). Advanced text comprehension is closely associated with critical and inferential thinking. The ability to identify implicit information, understand the author's

underlying purpose, distinguish evidence from conclusions, evaluate the reliability of information, and compare alternative perspectives indicates deep rather than superficial comprehension. Modern English lessons should therefore increase the use of problem-based and inferential tasks that require higher-order thinking alongside reproductive questions (OECD, 2023).

Applying the linguocognitive foundations of English text comprehension in educational practice can develop not only learners' reading skills but also independent thought, analytical and critical thinking, information-handling skills, and metacognitive competence. This approach can shift English-language teaching from a model focused on reproductive knowledge towards active, competence-based, learner-centred education. Systematic use of reading tasks and strategies designed according to linguocognitive principles is therefore an important condition for improving the effectiveness of contemporary English-language education (Council of Europe, 2020; OECD, 2023).

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