

METHODOLOGY OF TEACHING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE THROUGH LITERARY TEXTS

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Tukhtarova Iroda

*teacher of the Department of Foreign Languages,
Fergana State University,
Uzbekistan, Fergana*

Abstract

This article examines the didactic potential of literary texts in teaching a foreign language to students of non-linguistic faculties at higher educational institutions. The study focuses on the linguistic and methodological significance of literary works, principles of text selection, and the role of pre-text and post-text activities in the educational process. Special attention is paid to the use of foreign-language popular scientific texts as an effective means of expanding students' vocabulary, developing professional terminology, and increasing motivation for learning a foreign language. The stylistic characteristics of scientific and popular science texts in English are also analyzed.

Key words

reading, speech activity, literary text, foreign language teaching, linguistic approach, text analysis, popular science literature, educational process, terminology, non-linguistic faculties.

INTRODUCTION

A text is universally recognized as a coherent, structured, and meaningful communicative entity, composed of logically connected sentences arranged with intentionality and purpose. In contemporary linguistic theory, the definition of text has expanded beyond its classical structural interpretation. It is now viewed as a complex semiotic system in which linguistic form interacts with social, psychological, cultural, and cognitive variables to generate meaning. A text is not merely a sequence of sentences; it is a purposeful construct reflecting human reasoning, communicative goals, and contextual influences. For this reason, texts serve as the primary medium through which individuals articulate thoughts, negotiate meaning, construct social identities, and participate in social interaction.

In foreign language education, texts hold exceptional pedagogical value because they function simultaneously as linguistic input, cultural content, and cognitive stimulus. They expose learners to authentic forms of communication,

providing them with access to real-life vocabulary, grammar, discourse strategies, and pragmatic norms. At the same time, they represent cultural artifacts that embody a community's values, traditions, beliefs, and worldviews. Therefore, working with texts promotes not only linguistic proficiency but also intercultural competence, critical awareness, and holistic personal development. Recent educational paradigms, such as communicative language teaching and CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning), further highlight the necessity of integrating texts that enable learners to interpret meaning, evaluate perspectives, and engage in meaningful communication.

Among the various types of texts used in language instruction, literary texts occupy an especially significant position. Their expressive richness, symbolic depth, and aesthetic qualities make them powerful tools for stimulating imagination and emotional engagement. Literary discourse often presents multilayered meanings, complex characters, and culturally embedded themes that encourage learners to analyze, interpret, and reflect. Neuroscientific studies increasingly confirm that emotionally engaging content activates deeper cognitive processing, strengthens long-term memory, and enhances learners' motivation all of which contribute positively to the acquisition of a foreign language. Thus, literary texts not only serve as linguistic resources but also as emotional and cognitive catalysts.

Moreover, literary texts offer learners exposure to natural, authentic, and stylistically diverse language use. They reveal how words and structures gain meaning through context, stylistic choices, and narrative perspective. Unlike artificial exercises found in many textbooks, real literary works illustrate how grammar operates in authentic communication how dialogue reflects spoken interaction, how narrative tenses create temporal meaning, and how stylistic devices shape the reader's perception. Such exposure prepares students for real-world communication, equipping them with the ability to interpret subtle nuances, detect figurative meanings, and understand culturally shaped expressions.

METHODS

This study employs a descriptive-analytical, comparative, and interpretive methodological approach to investigate the pedagogical, linguistic, and aesthetic contributions of literary and popular scientific texts to foreign language teaching. The methodological design consists of several interconnected stages that ensure comprehensive and systematic analysis.

1. Linguistic Examination

The linguistic analysis centers on exploring the diverse lexical, grammatical, and stylistic characteristics present in the selected texts. This stage involves a

detailed investigation of the vocabulary choices, sentence structures, and stylistic patterns that shape the overall communicative impact of a text. Special attention is given to figurative language, including metaphors, idiomatic phrases, cohesive links, and structural features that enhance coherence and contribute to stylistic uniqueness. By analyzing literary devices such as symbolism, imagery, metonymy, allusion, and other expressive elements, the study illustrates how literary texts encourage readers to think beyond literal meanings and develop strong interpretive and inferential abilities. Such features challenge learners to engage deeply with the text, recognize underlying themes, and understand multilayered meanings.

In contrast, the linguistic study of scientific texts emphasizes accuracy, clarity, and the logical organization of information. Scientific discourse is characterized by its precise terminology, explicit definitions, and systematic presentation of ideas, all of which help learners become familiar with academic conventions. By examining how information is classified, sequenced, and supported with evidence, the analysis shows how scientific texts build the foundation for academic literacy and discipline-specific understanding. Through this dual approach, the study highlights the linguistic value of both text types.

2. Pedagogical Activity Framework

Instructional strategies involving texts are assessed through the pedagogical triad:

- **Pre-text activities:** activating background knowledge, setting communicative goals, introducing essential vocabulary, and stimulating prediction skills. This stage helps learners approach texts with conceptual readiness.
- **While-text activities:** applying reading strategies such as annotation, contextual inference, scanning and skimming, identifying discourse markers, and making interpretive guesses. These help learners decode meaning and monitor comprehension.
- **Post-text activities:** engaging learners in summarization, analytical discussions, creative responses, reflective writing, dramatization, and collaborative evaluation. This stage enhances critical thinking, emotional engagement, and communicative production.

Each stage is examined for its effectiveness in improving comprehension, fostering analytical thinking, and supporting productive language use.

3. Comparative Analysis of Text Types

This stage explores the distinctions between literary and scientific texts in terms of their communicative purposes and educational influence. Literary texts primarily aim to evoke emotional responses and stimulate the reader's imagination.

They draw attention to stylistic elements, artistic expression, and the aesthetic qualities of language, encouraging learners to develop sensitivity to tone, mood, symbolism, and other expressive features. By engaging readers on an emotional and interpretive level, literary texts foster creativity, empathy, and deeper cognitive involvement with the material.

Scientific texts, however, serve a fundamentally different function. Their main goal is to convey information that is accurate, factual, and systematically presented. These texts rely on clear definitions, precise terminology, and logically sequenced arguments to help readers grasp complex academic or technical concepts. Because of their structured nature, scientific texts are particularly useful for learners who need to build professional vocabulary and develop analytical comprehension skills relevant to specific fields of study.

By comparing these contrasting attributes, the study identifies how each type of text meets distinct learning needs. Literary texts support linguistic and cultural development, while scientific texts strengthen academic literacy and discipline-specific competence. Together, they provide a balanced foundation for students in both language-focused and non-linguistic academic programs.

4. Learner Engagement Evaluation

Learner engagement in the study is evaluated through multiple qualitative and quantitative tools, including direct classroom observations, structured interviews, comprehension-based activities, and reflective journal entries written by students. These sources provide insight into how learners interact with different types of texts and how their motivation develops throughout the learning process. The findings reveal that literary texts tend to strengthen intrinsic motivation—the natural desire to learn driven by curiosity, enjoyment, and personal interest. Because literary narratives often stimulate imagination, evoke emotions, and present relatable characters or situations, they encourage students to immerse themselves more fully in the reading experience. This emotional and intellectual involvement leads to deeper processing of language and improved retention.

In contrast, scientific texts contribute more strongly to extrinsic motivation. Their connection to academic requirements and real professional applications helps learners see a direct purpose for improving their language skills. When students recognize that mastering scientific vocabulary and understanding technical explanations can enhance their academic performance or future career prospects, they become more determined to engage with the material.

Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are essential components of effective language learning, and the combination of literary and scientific texts ensures that learners benefit from both motivational pathways.

5. Academic Skills Development

This stage places particular emphasis on the academic competencies that emerge through text-based learning. Literary texts, with their layered meanings and expressive language, cultivate higher-order thinking skills such as interpretation, critical examination, and the ability to connect themes across different parts of a narrative. Engaging with plot structures, character development, symbolism, and implied meanings trains learners to read beyond the surface and construct deeper analytical insights. Such practices not only expand linguistic awareness but also sharpen the intellectual skills needed for evaluating complex ideas.

Scientific texts, on the other hand, contribute to a different yet equally important set of academic abilities. Their structured presentation of information encourages learners to summarize research findings accurately, identify essential concepts, and understand domain-specific terminology. By examining definitions, classifications, data, and evidence, students learn how to judge the credibility of information and organize content logically. These skills are central to academic success, particularly in fields that rely heavily on research, factual accuracy, and systematic reasoning.

Together, literary and scientific texts form a complementary foundation for academic literacy. Their combined instructional value equips learners with analytical thinking, precise language use, informed judgment, and effective organization of ideas—competencies essential for thriving in higher education environments.

RESULTS

The findings demonstrate that literary and popular scientific texts offer distinct yet complementary advantages in foreign language education.

1. Linguistic Development

Learners who engage with literary texts show significant improvement in lexical diversity, structural flexibility, and stylistic sensitivity. Literary discourse exposes them to complex sentence patterns, expressive vocabulary, and figurative expressions, helping them develop deeper linguistic awareness. Scientific texts, by contrast, strengthen precision, clarity, and logical organization, enabling students to read and comprehend academic materials more efficiently.

2. Cognitive and Emotional Growth

Literary texts promote cognitive development by encouraging learners to interpret symbolic meanings, understand character motivations, and analyze narrative structures. Emotionally rich content enhances empathy, ethical reasoning,

and imagination. Scientific texts develop logical reasoning, structured thinking, and analytical precision. The combination of both fosters balanced intellectual growth.

3. Academic and Professional Vocabulary Acquisition

Scientific texts significantly expand technical and academic vocabulary, particularly useful in non-linguistic faculties such as engineering, economics, medicine, and social sciences. Literary texts enrich general vocabulary and colloquial expressions, enabling learners to communicate naturally and effectively in diverse contexts.

4. Reading Strategy Improvement

The structured use of pre-, while-, and post-text activities results in substantial improvement in reading comprehension strategies. Learners become adept at predicting content, identifying main ideas, interpreting contextual clues, and synthesizing information.

5. Enhanced Communicative Competence

Balanced exposure to expressive literary texts and structured scientific texts enables learners to confidently participate in discussions, defend arguments, express opinions, and engage in both interpersonal and academic communication. This integrative approach strengthens overall communicative competence.

DISCUSSION

The findings highlight the necessity of integrating multiple text types into foreign language education. Literary texts offer aesthetic experience, emotional depth, and linguistic richness, while scientific texts enhance factual understanding, academic precision, and professional readiness. Their combined use allows teachers to create a dynamic learning environment that promotes linguistic proficiency, cognitive development, and cultural awareness.

The study emphasizes that effective text-based instruction must go beyond passive reading. Active reading strategies—prediction, annotation, reflection, interpretation, and discussion—are essential for deep comprehension. When learners actively interact with texts, they construct meaning, express personal responses, and develop higher-order thinking skills.

Furthermore, literary texts play a crucial role in personal development by fostering empathy, creativity, cultural sensitivity, and imagination. Scientific texts contribute to the development of logical reasoning, analytical skills, and academic discipline. These complementary functions highlight the importance of providing learners with varied textual exposure to ensure balanced intellectual growth and communicative competence.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the expanded analysis confirms that literary and popular scientific texts are indispensable components of foreign language education. By integrating both types, teachers can address diverse linguistic, cognitive, emotional, and academic needs of learners. Literary texts enhance imagination, empathy, and expressive competence, while scientific texts strengthen precision, logical thinking, and disciplinary literacy.

A deliberate combination of text types, supported by structured pre-, while-, and post-text activities, creates a comprehensive and effective language learning environment. Such an approach prepares learners not only for real-life communication but also for academic study and professional success. Ultimately, well-designed text-based instruction fosters linguistically proficient, culturally aware, intellectually active, and communicatively confident individuals.

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