

Article

The Concept of Reading Literacy in Pedagogical and Psychological Literature

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Abstract: In the new century, the process of globalization is rapidly permeating all spheres of society, and this situation is imposing new tasks on the education system. Today, the practical application of methods and technologies that serve to enhance the quality of education is becoming a priority not only in science but also in the education system itself. As a result, in global academic circles, considerable attention is being given to practical research aimed at improving the quality of education and ensuring its overall effectiveness, rather than merely studying it from a theoretical perspective. This process, in turn, requires serious attention to the issue of developing reading literacy among school students and further improvement of methodologies in this area. The concept of "reading literacy" has evolved over the years in connection with changes in society, economy, culture, and technology, expanding its content and significance. Reading is no longer understood as a simple ability acquired in childhood, but as a set of knowledge and skills that a person develops throughout their life in the process of communicating in various contexts, exchanging ideas with their peers and the wider public. Active participation in society, acquiring knowledge, finding, understanding, and utilizing information are crucial abilities for every individual. Reading literacy remains an essential prerequisite for achieving success not only in education but also in various fields. Therefore, it is necessary to pay special attention to students' reading abilities, particularly their skills in selecting, comprehending, analyzing, and evaluating information. Reading literacy encompasses the ability to develop one's knowledge and potential, find one's place in society, deeply understand texts, analyze them based on one's own thoughts, and form personal attitudes towards them.

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1. Introduction

The concept of "reading literacy" first emerged in 1991 within the framework of the international PISA study. That same year, the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) proposed a research initiative to compare the quality of reading. In this context, the concept of "reading" was defined not only as a technique (in a narrow sense) but also as an ability in a broad functional context - to reflect on the read text and apply it for personal and social purposes, primarily for further education [1]. Today, international assessment programs, particularly PISA, play a crucial role in evaluating students' reading literacy, mathematical and natural science knowledge [2]. The results of this program are being used to analyze the state of countries' education systems and to develop effective strategies for their improvement.

In international studies on the quality of reading and text comprehension (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study - PIRLS), reading literacy is understood as the ability to comprehend and utilize all diverse forms of written language for purposes that are either required by society or valuable to the individual.

In the PISA study, reading literacy is defined as an individual's capacity to understand and use written texts, to reflect on them and engage with them to achieve their goals, to expand their knowledge and potential, and to participate in society. Here, the concept of "reading" is defined not only as reading and comprehending the content of a text but also in a broader functional context - as the ability to reflect on what is read and utilize the information to achieve personal and societal objectives [3]. Research on reading literacy and its significance varies, with studies attempting to assess the importance of literacy by examining different aspects. For instance, questions such as "How do countries with high achievements in reading literacy differ from those with low achievements?" help analyze scientific activity in connection with practical applications [4].

2. Materials and Methods

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and its representative in Uzbekistan, Doctor of Psychological Sciences G.A. Tsukerman, defines reading literacy as "the ability to understand and use written texts, reflect on them, and engage with them to achieve personal goals, expand knowledge, and enhance opportunities for participation in social life" [5]. In her works, G.A. Tsukerman distinguishes between the concepts of "reading literacy" and "reading." "Reading is understood as decoding - the process of converting letters into sounds. Reading literacy, however, encompasses knowledge of words, grammar, text structure, and the world, starting from basic decoding" [6].

From G.A. Tsukerman's thoughts, we can conclude that reading merely refers to the process of converting letters into sounds, that is, decoding. This is the initial stage, which indicates that a person can technically read the text, but not necessarily understand its meaning. "Reading literacy," however, is a much more complex concept, which encompasses not only decoding but also skills such as comprehending words and sentences, applying grammatical rules, grasping the logical structure of the text, and utilizing general knowledge about the world. A person with high reading literacy not only reads the text but also analyzes it, identifies the main ideas, and approaches it critically.

The term "reading literacy" initially emerged in the context of theoretical research conducted by the international Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). This organization examines questions related to how well the outcomes of modern school education align with labor market demands. The PISA test was developed at the request of the OECD specifically to measure the competencies of students completing school. However, the creators of the PISA test prefer to avoid overusing the concept of "competence" - this term typically refers to the ability to act effectively in non-standard, non-school situations [7]. Instead, they opt for a more neutral term - "reading literacy."

In this study, several scientific research methods were employed to examine the concept of reading literacy as presented in pedagogical and psychological literature. Firstly, the method of theoretical analysis was used to study existing scientific literature on reading literacy and analyze the approaches of various scholars.

This method allowed for determining the essence of concepts and revealing their semantic aspects. Secondly, the historical-comparative method was applied to investigate the developmental process of the reading literacy concept across different periods. This approach enabled the identification of change dynamics and comparison of scientific views from various eras. Thirdly, the content analysis method was utilized to identify the main concepts related to reading literacy in scientific literature and their application

characteristics. This method facilitated a systematic study of scientific approaches to the specific topic.

In addition, deductive and inductive methods of analysis were employed. Using the deductive method, specific conclusions were drawn from general theoretical perspectives. The inductive method, on the other hand, relied on individual studies and evidence related to reading literacy to help formulate generalized scientific conclusions. These methods enabled the enhancement of research reliability and the derivation of precise scientific inferences.

The methods selected for this research are complementary and interconnected, serving to provide a deep examination of the concept of reading literacy from both pedagogical and psychological perspectives. While theoretical analysis and content analysis methods played a crucial role in determining the essence of the concept, the historical-comparative method helped to understand the dynamics of change.

Deductive and inductive analysis methods formed the basis for synthesizing research results and drawing scientific conclusions. Additionally, these methods ensured the reliability and logical coherence of the obtained data. The research findings can be utilized in developing practical recommendations aimed at improving the educational process related to reading literacy in the future.

3. Results

N.N. Smetannikova emphasizes the need to distinguish between the terms "reading literacy" and "book literacy" [8]. In the first case, it refers to the active use of reading in various situations and for various purposes, while in the second case, it involves developing knowledge and participating in society by understanding the content of the text, using it, and reflecting on what is read. Taking into account the authors' opinion, it can be said that reading literacy is the ability to understand what is read, use it, reflect on what is read, and thereby expand knowledge and apply it in life.

According to N.F. Vinogradova, reading literacy encompasses the following set of abilities and skills:

1. Socialization: the need for engaging in reading activities for the purpose of education and self-development;
2. Readiness for meaningful reading: the ability to perceive, analyze, evaluate, interpret written texts, and synthesize the information contained within them;
3. Capacity to process necessary information for learning tasks: the ability to navigate real-life situations using various forms of textual information [9]

Academician A.V. Usova, linking reading literacy with physics education, paid great attention to developing skills that help students explain physics-related concepts. She considered it important to cultivate clear and logical narrative abilities in correctly interpreting physics concepts, laws, graphs, tables, and diagrams [10]. A.V. Usova identified the essential skills necessary for working with text and determined in which grades these skills should be formed (Table 1).

Table 1. Essential skills to be developed when working with printed text.

No	Essential Skills	Grades
1.	Reading text fluently, comprehensively, and expressively	(Grades 1-3)
2.	Independently divide the text into sections, provide titles for them, and highlight the main ideas	(Grades 3-4)
3.	Creating outlines based on textbook paragraphs	(Grades 4-5).
4.	Find answers to the questions provided by the teacher or given in the book at the end of the paragraph	(Grades 4-5)

No	Essential Skills	Grades
5.	Working with images and creating stories based on them	(Grades 4–5)
6.	Planning lessons for storytelling by teachers	(Grades 5)
7.	Working with tables of contents, subject indexes, and name indexes	(Grades 5–6)
8.	Working with graphs and tables	(Grades 6–7)
9.	Identifying systematic scientific elements in the text (scientific facts, concepts, laws, theories)	(Grades 7–8)
10.	Working with comprehensive plans	(Grades 7–8)
11.	Working with complex text: breaking it down into parts and developing an intricate plan for formulating a response	(Grades 9–10)
12.	Taking notes on supplementary readings	(Grades 10–11)
13.	When preparing for a seminar, create thesis outlines, work with the catalog, and find independent literature on topics that have sparked interest.	(Grades 10–11)
14.	Creating a Bibliography	(Grades 10–11)
15.	Comparing identical questions from various sources and expressing one's own perspective	(Grades 11)

XX asrning yigirmanchi yillarida N.K. Krupskaya tomonidan kitob bilan ishlash bo'yicha qo'yilgan vazifalardan biri quyidagicha edi:

1. The first task is to comprehend and internalize the studied material.
2. The second task is to reflect on what has been read.
3. The third task is to write down the essential information from the reading that needs to be memorized.
4. The fourth task is to answer for yourself what new things the book you've read has taught you" [11].

Drawing on the ideas of N.K. Krupskaya, we can assert that individuals with well-developed reading literacy not only easily comprehend texts but also derive pleasure from them.

The research results revealed that the concept of reading literacy is interpreted differently in pedagogical and psychological literature. From a pedagogical perspective, reading literacy is defined as the development of skills in reading, comprehending, interpreting, and utilizing text. In the psychological approach, it is emphasized that this concept is closely linked to an individual's cognitive processes, memory, thinking, and attention. Based on the analyzed literature, it was determined that reading literacy typically manifests at three levels: basic literacy (reading and comprehending text), critical literacy (analyzing and evaluating the main ideas in the text), and creative literacy (generating new ideas based on the information read).

Furthermore, according to the results of historical-comparative analysis, while reading literacy was primarily assessed as a technical skill in the 20th century, in the 21st century this concept has expanded, emphasizing the necessity of integrating it with critical and creative thinking, as well as digital technologies. The results of content analysis have shown that in modern literature, reading literacy is not limited to reading printed texts, but also includes the skills of reading, analyzing, and effectively using information in digital formats.

As a result of deductive and inductive analyses, it has been determined that the educational environment plays a significant role in the development of reading literacy. The improvement of pedagogical methods and technologies directly impacts the increase in students' reading literacy levels. The results indicate that it is essential to implement innovative approaches and technologies to enhance reading literacy in the educational process. Furthermore, reading literacy is considered a crucial factor in students' overall intellectual development and the formation of their critical thinking skills.

4. Discussion

A person who has mastered reading literacy has no difficulty reading books, articles, scientific literature, and other types of texts, and this activity becomes their favorite pastime. This, in turn, contributes to the formation of a reading culture. Reading literacy is one of the primary tools of human cognition, which encourages people to read consciously and actively. This process becomes systematic and serves to enrich the repository of human culture and knowledge. The development of a reading culture directly impacts people's spiritual and intellectual growth. G.A. Tsukerman emphasizes that reading culture is one of the essential components of a person's general culture. At the same time, the foundation for cultivating a reading culture lies in developing reading literacy skills. In turn, these serve as a foundation for developing reading competence, which is a system of knowledge and skills that enables not only reading but also comprehending, interpreting, and applying the acquired information in practice. (Fig. 1)

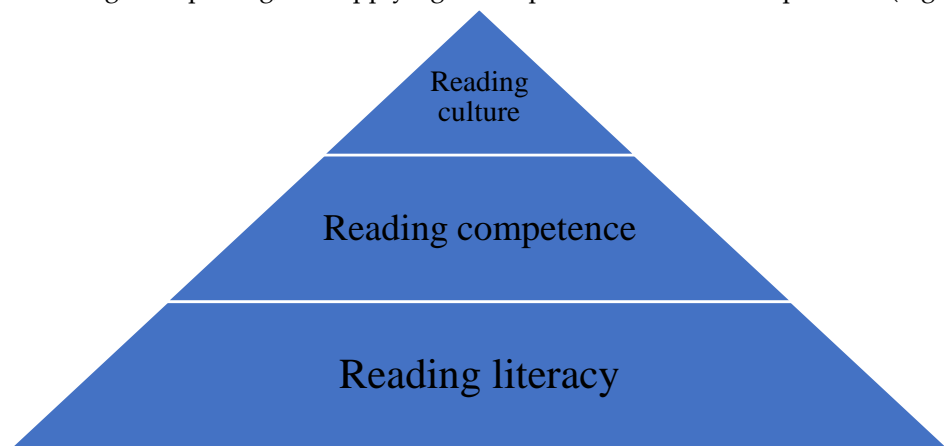


Figure 1. Sequence of developing reading culture.

I.V. Osipova interprets reading culture as a specific level of development in reading skills and abilities, which encompasses: the need for reading and a sustained interest in it, reading erudition, reading proficiency, the capacity to comprehend various literary works, bibliographic knowledge, creative capabilities, evaluation and interpretation skills, and verbal proficiency [12]. In her dissertation titled "Forming the Reading Culture of Young Readers," N.V. Ponomaryova defines reading culture as the culture of a young reader [13]. Thus, we can conclude that reading culture encompasses the acquisition of theoretical and literary concepts, satisfying the need for self-education, self-sufficiency in information, identifying necessary sources of knowledge, including working with books, searching for information in libraries, and finding required data in online databases on the Internet.

Reading is the process by which individuals receive, comprehend, contemplate, and derive meaning from written text. This process is not limited to merely recognizing letters or reading aloud, but also encompasses cognitive, affective, and metacognitive aspects.

In the textbook "Psychology and Sociology of Reading," A.V. Sebeleva identified the following factors influencing the reading process:

1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the reader: gender, age, nationality, social status, and social positions of the individual;

2. Socio-psychological characteristics: worldview, value orientations, beliefs, needs, motives, interests, and views;
3. Experience (life and reading experience), knowledge, skills, abilities, and habits;
4. Cognitive mental processes: perception, imagination, anticipation (foresight, prediction), visualization, memory, thinking, and attention;
5. Emotional and psychological characteristics: feelings, emotions, willpower, and mood;
6. Reading objectives: learning new things, obtaining information; self-expression, information exchange; entertainment, distraction; studying something; enjoying a well-written and well-designed book [14].

A.V. Sebeleva's manual presents the psychological characteristics of the reader (Table 2).

Table 2. Psychological Characteristics of the Learner.

Age	Reading
Childhood (until reaching full adulthood)	Interest in new, bright, and unusual things - reading fairy tales, exotic adventures, science fiction, and encyclopedias. Striving to explore various genres. A reader's taste is formed by the age of 11-12.
Youth (ages 18-25)	The student continues to explore their field of study, showing interest in new things and a readiness for experiments.
Adult (25-65 years old)	The student's reading taste becomes fully developed. Professional reading.
Old age (65 years and above)	The student's reading taste becomes fully developed. They read familiar literature and re-read books multiple times. Their reading focus may include areas such as gardening, medicine, and household tasks.

Taking into account the purpose of reading and the differences in various states of human interaction with text, in our work we consider reading as a tool for acquiring any knowledge (including subject-specific knowledge) or a form of social practice (solving educational tasks or problems).

The research results revealed that the concept of reading literacy is interpreted differently in scientific literature regarding its pedagogical and psychological aspects. While in traditional approaches this concept is primarily associated with the technical aspects of reading and text comprehension, modern research examines it in a broader sense, integrating it with critical and creative thinking (Snow, 2002; Vygotsky, 1986).

Based on the analyzed literature, it has been established that reading literacy is inextricably linked with an individual's cognitive development. The theories of Piaget [15] and Bruner [16] demonstrate that the reading process is dependent on the stages of an individual's mental development and is closely related to logical thinking and metacognitive abilities. Developing reading literacy in modern education requires the effective use of technological tools. Within the framework of the TPACK model proposed by Mishra and Koehler [17], students' reading literacy can be formed at a high level when teachers' pedagogical, technological, and content knowledge are integrated. Furthermore, the results of the PISA studies [18] indicate that students with high reading literacy possess the ability to understand and solve complex problems in society. Therefore, in the education system, it is crucial to focus not only on traditional reading but also on developing critical and creative reading skills. Additionally, the research findings support the conclusions of pedagogical and psychological scholars, further confirming that reading literacy is closely tied to the educational environment. In the future, it would be beneficial to conduct more in-depth studies in this area, considering students' age-specific characteristics and the effectiveness of various educational strategies.

5. Conclusion

Thus, after studying pedagogical and psychological literature dedicated to the problem of developing reading literacy, as well as analyzing materials from specialists organizing international research on this issue, we have reached the following conclusion: there is no single definition of the concept of "reading literacy" that accounts for all the main features of this phenomenon, neither among scientists dealing with this problem nor among organizers of international research. Taking this into consideration, and based on the idea that literacy is a skill, we draw upon the work of N.F. Vinogradova, G.A. Tsukerman, and A.V. Usova on the formation of this skill, the key features highlighted by international research organizers and scientists addressing the problem, as well as studies on reading literacy of the growing generation in our country. Consequently, we understand reading literacy as follows:

1. The ability to read, acquire, locate, analyze, comprehend, evaluate, and synthesize various types of information (from educational materials, popular science literature, popular science periodicals, and other sources, including mass media and Internet sites);
2. The skill to find necessary information, integrate it according to the specified task, interpret, and process it;
3. The capability to apply the obtained information in life and professional situations.

The results of this study revealed that the concept of reading literacy is interpreted differently in pedagogical and psychological literature. Modern approaches are not limited to merely reading and comprehending text, but also encompass critical and creative thinking, as well as skills in working with digital technologies. The research demonstrated that integrating pedagogical methods with innovative technologies is crucial for developing reading literacy. International studies, such as PISA, confirm the impact of these skills on societal development. In the future, it is necessary to examine reading literacy more deeply from the perspectives of age characteristics and educational methods. These findings serve as an important scientific foundation for developing effective strategies in the educational process.

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