
**COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH TO TESTING
PROSPECTIVE FINANCIERS' ESP READING SKILLS**

Korol Tetiana

DOI <https://doi.org/10.30525/978-9934-26-712-3-2-10>

INTRODUCTION

Effective assessment is the key to productive teaching and learning in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) domain, which features students' mixed abilities, limited contact hours, and specific professional focus of the studied language materials. In this context, the quality of the assessment results strongly depends on the combination of different external and internal factors, including the dynamics of educational environment, the nature of the tested construct, the quality of the developed assessment tools and procedures, and students' individual peculiarities.

Reading is still one of the most accessible types of indirect professional communication, which provides a solid basis for the further development and enhancement of students' productive skills in diverse spheres. Consequently, the effective testing of students' ESP reading skills requires the development of the communicative test tasks which mirror the situations of real-life communication through professionally-oriented authentic English texts.

The implementation of communicative approach to contemporary language testing relies on sufficient theoretical foundations: general provisions for the arrangement of the communicative testing of foreign language skills^{1, 2}, requirements for the development and application of the communicative tests to measure students' ESP reading skills^{3, 4, 5} as well as specific methods to convert

¹ Milton J. *Measuring Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition*. Bristol, Buffalo, Toronto: Multilingual Matters, 2009. 278 p.

² Weir C. J. *Language testing and validation: an evidence-based approach*. L.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. 320 p.

³ Douglas D. *Assessing Language for Specific Purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 311 p.

⁴ Король Т. Г. Реалізація комунікативного підходу до тестового контролю іншомовної компетенції у читанні студентів немовних спеціальностей. *Вісник Чернівецького державного педагогічного університету імені Т. Г. Шевченка. Серія : педагогічні науки : Збірник*. 2009. Вип. 70. С. 112–115.

⁵ Король, Т. Г. *Система тестового контролю англомовної компетенції у читанні фахової літератури майбутніми фінансистами*: дис. ... канд. пед. наук: 13.00.02. Київ, 2012. 394 с.

an ESP reading test into a meaningful communicative and professional task in different national contexts^{6, 7, 8, 9}. However, the operational ways and techniques to model and reproduce real-life communicative situations in ESP test tasks in reading should be further considered and defined, especially in the context of financial domain.

Therefore, this chapter aims to present and specify the main ways to develop communicative test tasks in ESP reading for prospective financiers.

1. The features of a communicative task in reading

As already noted, the communicative approach to testing ESP reading skills involves reconstruction of the real-life patterns of language use as a means of communication when developing each individual test item. This brings the created test situation as close as possible to non-test circumstances of foreign-language professional communication, thereby ensuring a high degree of test authenticity and, consequently, significantly higher validity of the test results obtained^{10, 11, 12, 13, 14}. We see its implementation in the modelling of the characteristics of real-life professional communication in the process of ESP reading within each individual test item¹⁵. In its turn, the modelling of any object or phenomenon must necessarily be guided by a clear understanding of its original.

Based on an analysis of reading by ESP students – both as a professional activity in general, and a linguistic and cognitive activity in particular– we identify the following characteristic features that should be reflected in the relevant testing materials: 1) the mediation of communication through text;

⁶ Duong T. M., Truong M. L. Task-based language teaching: A possible remedy for Vietnamese EFL students' ESP reading comprehension at a vocational college. *Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Studies*. 2022. № 22(2). P. 291–306.

⁷ Krekeler C. Designing complex LSP tasks for assessment purposes. *The Journal of Teaching English for Specific and Academic Purposes*. 2018. Vol. 6, № 2, Special Issue. P. 225–233.

⁸ Mămăligă A. Developments in ESP testing practice: Test design. *Culegere de articole selectivale Conferinței Științifice Internaționale „Competitivitatea și Inovarea în Economia Cunoașterii”*, 22–23 septembrie 2017, Chișinău, Vol. II. P. 164–168.

⁹ Norris J. M. Current Uses for Task-Based Language Assessment. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*. 2016. №36 (2016). P. 230-244.

¹⁰ Петрашук О. П. Теоретичні основи контролю інішомовної комунікативної компетенції учнів середньої загальноосвітньої школи : дис. ... доктора пед. наук : 13.00.02. К., 2000. 553 с.

¹¹ Bachman L. F. *Language Testing in Practice: Designing and Developing Useful Language Tests*. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1996. 377 p.

¹² Brown J. D. *Testing in language programs*. New Jersey, USA: Prentice Hall International, 1996. 324 p.

¹³ Hughes A. *Testing for Language Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. 172 p.

¹⁴ Lewkowicz J. Authenticity in language testing: some outstanding questions. *Language Testing*. 2000. Vol. 17 (1). P. 43–64.

¹⁵ Bachman L. F. *Language Testing in Practice: Designing and Developing Useful Language Tests*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. 377 p.

- 2) the purposefulness of reading activity¹⁶; 3) its professional orientation¹⁷; 4) its problem-oriented nature^{18, 19}; 5) the situational nature of its unfolding^{20, 21}.

In the context of ESP reading, the interaction between the participants of communication is mediated by the text, that is, it follows the model 'reader–text–author' and is aimed primarily at obtaining the necessary information. The result of such interaction should be the achievement of a level of understanding the of the target text message relevant to the stated aim. Proper comprehension of an ESP text as a result of reading, in turn, manifests itself in the reader's ability to apply the information thus acquired in new communicative contexts / speech situations²². The comprehension of ESP text during the reading process is determined both by the objective characteristics of the text (its information density, linguistic, logical and subject-matter complexity), and by the subjective characteristics of the individual reader (their life and linguistic experience, the level of ESP reading proficiency, the presence of domain-specific or expert knowledge, and individual characteristics of mental processes and functions)^{23, 24, 25, 26}.

Undoubtedly, any activity is motivated, that is, driven and guided by a complex hierarchy of human needs, motives and interests. In our case, these are professional, communicative and cognitive ones. Within a specific speech situation, communicative motivation is realised through the reader having a specific communicative task²⁷. According to L. F. Bakhman and

¹⁶ Скляренко Н. К. Принципи формування іншомовної комунікативної компетенції. *Мова культура й освіта у сучасному світі : [збірник наукових праць до 90-річчя доктора філологічних наук, професора Романовського О.К.]* / Відп. ред. Стишов О. А. К. : Вид. центр КНЛУ, 2008. С. 237–242.

¹⁷ Douglas D. *Assessing Language for Specific Purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 311 p.

¹⁸ Grabe W. *Reading in a Second Language: Moving from theory to Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. 467 p.

¹⁹ Heine L. *Problem Solving in a Foreign Language*. Berlin, NY: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. KG, 2010. 217 p.

²⁰ Douglas D. *Assessing Language for Specific Purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 311 p.

²¹ Douglas D. *Understanding language testing*. L., UK: Hodder Education, 2010. 156 p.

²² Тарнопольський О. Б. *Методика навчання англійської мови на II курсі технічного вузу : [посібник]* К. : Вища школа, 1993. 167 с.

²³ Brantmeier C. Effects of reader's knowledge, text type, and test type on L1 and L2 reading comprehension in Spanish. *Modern Language Journal*. 2005. Vol. 89. P. 37–53.

²⁴ *Implicit and Explicit Knowledge in Second Language Learning, Testing and Teaching* / [Ellis R., Loewen S., Elder C. et al]; ed. by D. Singleton. Bristol, Buffalo, Toronto: Multilingual Matters, 2009. 391 p.

²⁵ Koda K. *Insights into Second Language Reading: A Cross-Linguistic Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. 319 p.

²⁶ Shiotsu T. *Components of L2 Reading: Linguistic and processing factors in the reading test performances of Japanese EFL learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 232 p.

²⁷ Nunan D. *Task-based Language Teaching*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 222 p.

A. S. Palmer²⁸, the communicative task is the activity that prompts an individual to use the language to achieve a specific communicative outcome within the context of a particular communicative situation. It acts as the driving force and motivation in organising reading as a speech activity, creating the necessary communicative attitude towards reading a specific text and subsequently monitoring one's comprehension of it. Consequently, a communicative task incorporates the need to engage in reading (a lack of certain information required to complete the set task), specifies the corresponding degree of completeness, accuracy and depth of text comprehension, and determines the dominant type or types of reading, outlines the desired outcome (extracting specific amounts of information with corresponding qualitative characteristics), which serves as the necessary foundation for producing a specific output of academic or professional activity (writing an abstract or report, carrying out calculations, etc.). The presence of the latter ensures that the recipient of the ESP text can verify the success of the communicative task completion. The leading communicative tasks in ESP reading include: a) *information-seeking tasks*, aimed at receiving or receiving and transmitting information. These are closely linked to the realisation of the reader's cognitive and communicative needs and interests; b) *information-behavioural tasks*, which involve extracting information with a view to its subsequent application for carrying out specific practical actions. Accordingly, these communicative tasks are predominantly of an applied nature and, therefore, relate to ensuring the professional aspect of motivation for mediated communication in ESP reading.

The professional focus of ESP reading closely correlates with one's professional motivation. After all, the specific situation of reading ESP texts, on the one hand, always subordinate to professional activity as a whole, and on the other, relates to a specific English specialist text or texts and involves not only obtaining certain information but also its subsequent practical application for professional purposes. Consequently, the communicative tasks involving indirect communication in English as a foreign language are always integrated into the process of tackling real professional tasks and constitute professional communicative tasks (PCTs). The nature and content of PCTs are determined by the specific nature of professional activity within a particular domain.

The problem-oriented nature of ESP reading lies in the existence of a certain cognitive gap or dissonance, caused by objective contradictions between the reader's linguistic and subject-specific/expert knowledge, and the knowledge required both for the successful comprehension of an English text whilst reading

²⁸ Bachman L. F., Palmer A. S. *Language Testing in Practice: Designing and Developing Useful Language Tests*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. 377 p.

and for solving the academic or professional task at hand^{29, 30}. Even the very act of comprehending a text is a complex mental process, achieved through the reader's resolution of specific mental tasks in particular problematic situations, which leads to the identification of the speech-cognitive actions inherent in reading with the actions and operations characteristic of the cognitive process as a whole. This, in turn, allows us to consider the problematic nature of reading as a means of communication on three levels simultaneously: 1) the presence of a problem-based task that precedes the reading process and acts as a kind of 'trigger', a means of controlling it. The student's awareness that it is impossible to complete the set task without additional information ensures their motivational readiness to read, even during testing; 2) problem-based tasks that arise directly during the reading process and are linked to the perception and comprehension of the ESP text itself; 3) problem-based tasks related to responding to the information obtained and its subsequent application to solve set academic or professional tasks.

All the above-mentioned features of ESP mediated communication in the reading of specialist literature are realised within the framework of a specific communicative situation, which provides a particular context for the reader's interaction with the author of the text through the reading of a specific text with the aim of extracting the necessary information under specific circumstances. It is for this reason that the reproduction of the main features of real-life ESP reading within the context of testing and assessment should be carried out by modelling a specific situation of academic or professional activity, which involves the user engaging with a specialist English text^{31, 32, 33, 34}.

Based on the identified characteristics of ESP mediated communication in reading, we define the following sequence for modelling real-life communication situations in this type of speech activity: 1) selection of an English, professionally oriented textual material; 2) reproduction of information-seeking and information-behavioural communicative tasks in testing materials; 3) introduction of a problem-solving dimension to the

²⁹ Барабанова Г. В. Когнітивно-комунікативна модель навчання професійно орієнтованого читання іноземною мовою в немовному вузі. *Іноземні мови*. 2004. №1. С. 29–30.

³⁰ Heine L. *Problem Solving in a Foreign Language*. Berlin, NY: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. KG, 2010. 217 p.

³¹ Петрашук О. П. *Теоретичні основи контролю іноземної комунікативної компетенції учнів середньої загальноосвітньої школи* : дис. ... доктора пед. наук : 13.00.02. К., 2000. 553 с.

³² Bachman L. F. *Language Testing in Practice: Designing and Developing Useful Language Tests*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. 377 p.

³³ Lewkowicz J. Authenticity in language testing: some outstanding questions. *Language Testing*. 2000. Vol. 17 (1). P. 43–64.

³⁴ Квасова О. Г. *Основи тестування іноземних навичок і вмінь* : [навчальний посібник]. К. : Ленвіт, 2009. 119 с.

modelled communication patterns; 4) provision of the necessary contextual information.

Let us examine each of these steps in greater detail and specify them for the development of test tasks in reading English financial literature. The selection of English texts must ensure the choice of material which, on the one hand, embodies the typical characteristics of English literature in a specific domain, and on the other, can be applied by specialists in the course of their direct professional activities³⁵.

2. The ways to model real-life communication situations in the test tasks

The process of selecting texts must be guided by a set of selection criteria to assess their suitability based on quantitative and qualitative indicators. In our case, there is a need to refine these criteria in accordance with the research objective, which entails taking into account both the linguo-stylistic features of the English financial scientific texts and the specific organisation of language training in the context of modern higher education institutions, as well as the key parameters of the real-life situation of English-language communication when future financiers read specialist literature.

The issue of text selection is predominantly investigated within the framework of developing specific methodologies for teaching reading in a foreign language, including for students at non-linguistic specialties at higher education³⁶. In accordance with the curriculum requirements for the textual material to be used in the teaching and assessment of ESP reading by students of non-linguistic programmes, including prospective financiers, the sources of text materials for the development of test tasks in reading include authentic specialist textbooks, guidebooks, reference books and encyclopaedias, specialist journals and newspapers, professional websites and the websites of various financial institutions, as well as banking and financial documents^{37, 38}. Given that reading comprehension tasks are an integral component of the process of teaching ESP and a means of monitoring its effectiveness, we propose using the criteria for selecting English-language

³⁵ Барабанова Г. В. Когнітивно-комунікативна модель навчання професійно орієнтованого читання іноземною мовою в немовному вузі. *Іноземні мови*. 2004. №1. С. 29–30.

³⁶ Малюга О. С. *Навчання професійно орієнтованого читання наукових англомовних текстів студентів-магістрів аграрних спеціальностей* : дис. ... канд. пед. наук : 13.00.02. К., 2007. 217 с.

³⁷ Король Т. Г. Врахування особливостей тесту Cambridge ICFE при створенні системи тестового контролю англомовної компетенції у читанні. *Вісник КНЛУ. Серія : педагогіка та психологія*. 2009. Вип. 16. С. 41–50.

³⁸ *Програма з англійської мови для професійного спілкування* / Г. Є. Бакаєва, О. А. Борисенко, І. І. Зуєнок та ін. К. : Ленвіт, 2005. 119 с.

texts for reading instruction, which can be adapted for our study, and to supplement them with specific selection criteria related to the functions of reading comprehension in the learning process and the leading approaches to its organisation.

Consequently, the main criteria for selecting English financial texts for the purpose of developing test items include: 1) *authenticity*: the selection of text material from original English-language specialist sources intended specifically for professionals in the field of finance³⁹; 2) *topicality and professional significance*: the list of texts for creating assessment tasks should include only those containing new and up-to-date information which, on the one hand, is likely to remain interesting and relevant to students over a long period of time, and on the other, can be utilised in their current academic or future professional activities; 3) *genre representation*: the inclusion of texts from the most common genres and types of authentic English-language financial literature; 4) *correlation of text types with assessment constructs*, for example, types of reading in which macro-skills are assessed⁴⁰; 5) *thematic relevance*: the use of texts on specific topics within the context of students' study of a particular subject or topic; 6) *text length*: the selection of complete, coherent texts of the minimum length necessary to measure the level of development of a particular assessment construct, which is explained by the desire to minimise the testing process as much as possible. According to the analysis of the text volumes used in the reading section of Cambridge ICFE (International Certificate in Financial English) test⁴¹, the length of texts, depends on the type of reading assessed and ranges as follows: between 2,000 and 5,500 printed characters for skimming, between 3,000 and 10,000 printed characters for reading for details, and between 6,000 and 26,000 printed characters for scanning.

Based on the linguo-stylistic features of English financial scientific texts and the specifics of testing implementation in contemporary higher education institutions, we identify the following specific criteria for their selection: 1) absence of complete duplication of information, as presented in the text through verbal and extralinguistic means, which is due to the richness of the English financial texts in various illustrations that fully or partially reproduce the main content of the text; 2) subject-matter accessibility: the inclusion of texts

³⁹ Малюга О. С. Навчання професійно орієнтованого читання наукових англійських текстів студентів-магістрів аграрних спеціальностей : дис. ... канд. пед. наук : 13.00.02. К., 2007. 217 с.

⁴⁰ Малюга О. С. Навчання професійно орієнтованого читання наукових англійських текстів студентів-магістрів аграрних спеціальностей : дис. ... канд. пед. наук : 13.00.02. К., 2007. 217 с.

⁴¹ Король Т. Г. Врахування особливостей тесту Cambridge ICFE при створенні системи тестового контролю англійської компетенції у читанні. Вісник КНУТД. Серія : педагогіка та психологія. 2009. Вип. 16. С. 41–50.

whose subject-matter complexity corresponds to the students' level of mastery of the relevant subject-specific/expert knowledge; 3) problem-based nature: the presence or potential for creating an objective contradiction between the content of the text and students' individual subject-specific/expert knowledge and experience, on the one hand, and between students' existing linguistic and subject-specific/expert knowledge and the knowledge required to complete the set academic/professional task, on the other. A similar criterion for selecting texts for teaching ESP reading is occasionally found in the works of Ukrainian methodologists. However, it is mostly viewed as the presence in the text of a specific problem, which the author describes from various perspectives and which requires evaluation by the reader; much less frequently – in a context similar to our study – merely as the presence or possibility of creating an objective contradiction between the text and the students' knowledge and experience; 4) uniqueness of the information presented in the text: the inclusion of texts containing professionally relevant information not found in any of the literary sources in the students' native language. This information may relate not only to the presentation of completely unknown facts, but also to the presentation of new critical observations, topical comments and unconventional viewpoints regarding well-known facts, processes and phenomena in financial and economic activity. The emphasis on this criterion stems from one of the characteristics of real-life ESP communication, namely the need to resort to it in order to obtain information that cannot be obtained from the sources in the native language; 5) equivalence of texts for the student's self-testing and hetero testing: the selection of two texts on a common topic and of the same level of linguistic and logical complexity, with the aim of creating, in parallel, a test task for the hetero and self-testing.

The next step in modelling real-life communication situations in the test tasks in ESP reading is to reproduce real professional communicative tasks. To this end, it is necessary to analyse the main types of professional activity undertaken by financiers and the corresponding professional situations, as set out in the profession profiles and the educational and qualification characteristics for this profession, with the aim of identifying a list of typical information-seeking professional communicative tasks (PCT I) and information-behavioural professional communicative tasks (PCT II) in reading English financial literature⁴². However, within the context of any real-world professional activity, including financial work, their distinction is somewhat arbitrary. Generally speaking, the professional activities of a financial manager involve the

⁴² Bachman L. F. *Language Testing in Practice: Designing and Developing Useful Language Tests*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. 377 p.

collection and processing of significant volumes of information, including that presented in English-language sources, given, on the one hand, the high degree of integration of our country's financial system into the global economy, and, on the other hand, the wide range of aspects of a financier's professional activities, which have been developed much more thoroughly by foreign scholars in the field of financial and economic disciplines than by domestic scholars. The information obtained from reading English-language texts is analysed in detail, compared, evaluated and interpreted with a view to its subsequent application for planning, forecasting and decision-making in the management of both specific aspects and financial activities as a whole.

The performance of information-seeking tasks (PCT I) within the scope of a financier's professional activities involves receiving and assimilating information (memorising, taking notes, summarising, etc.) and is primarily geared towards the subsequent transfer of this information to colleagues or clients, which is achieved through the performance of communicative tasks in productive speech activities. In a financier's professional practice, information-search communicative tasks include: 1) reviewing and familiarizing oneself with new directions in theoretical research and practical achievements in the financial domain. This task is linked to satisfying cognitive and professional motivations for professional development and involves the consistent use of skimming, scanning and reading for details. The outcome of this task is the reader's acquisition of new knowledge and experience; 2) selecting external sources of information in accordance with the purpose of their subsequent application to solve professional tasks. This task is carried out by a financier in the process of developing effective information systems that provide a basis for evaluating alternative management decisions. The predominant types of reading here are skimming and scanning. The outcome of this task is the compilation of a list of external, authoritative English-language references, which will subsequently be used to address a specific professional task; 3) studying information regarding specific aspects of the financial activities of one's own enterprise and the financial performance of potential partners or competitors; analyzing, on this basis the causes and consequences of successful or unsuccessful financial policies; and summarizing the information obtained according to specific criteria. These tasks are carried out by the financier whilst analysing various aspects of financial activity through reading for details. The result is the preparation of reports and financial reviews, and the creation of an information base for subsequent management decision-making.

Information-behavioural professional communicative tasks (PCT II) in ESP reading by prospective financiers involve extracting textual information for subsequent application in practical activities, primarily for managerial

decision-making. Among PCT II, we highlight the following: 1) forecasting financial market conditions when developing a financial strategy by studying, analysing and evaluating the main trends in the development of the financial market. This task is carried out through skimming and reading for details. The outcome of this task is the preparation of a report on the state of the financial market, the creation of a financial forecast, and the making of management decisions; 2) planning the company's financial activities across key areas, based on the results of financial analysis and forecasting. Information for carrying out this task is gathered through scanning and reading for details. The outcome is the planning of financial activities and the making of management decisions; 3) studying, analyzing, evaluating and selecting the optimal methods for encouraging the implementation of management decisions, effective forms and sources of funding, the most profitable ways of allocating capital, promising areas for investment, optimal investment projects, minimal financial risks, insurance schemes, etc. The predominant types of reading in this case are skimming and reading for details. Based on the analysed information, a wide range of managerial decisions is made. A summary of the content of the information-search and information- behavioural communicative tasks in ESP reading by future financiers, the corresponding types of reading, and the indicative outcomes of their performance is presented in Table 1.

The next step in modelling a real-life communication situation in ESP reading is to introduce a problem into the simulated PCTs. Following relevant psychological studies, we understand a problem-based task to be the verbal formulation of a problem in the form of a task that creates a problematic situation and requires the individual to discover or acquire something subjectively new: previously unknown knowledge or a course of action. The problem-based tasks included in the communication situation for ESP reading are based on the following contradictions and discrepancies: between the content of an English text and students' individual subject-specific/expert knowledge and experience, on the one hand, and between students' existing linguistic and subject-specific/expert knowledge and the knowledge required to complete the set academic/professional task, on the other.

In the course of their professional activities, financiers are constantly required to reconcile conflicting objectives whilst simultaneously selecting the optimal solutions to several challenging problems. Their professional practice is characterised by collaborative problem-solving, which must also be taken into account when modelling relevant situations in teaching and testing materials; for example, by involving a third party in the communication who has their own perspective on the issue, requires assistance in resolving it, etc. Drawing

PCT in reading English financial literature by prospective financiers

Table 1

PCT type	PCT content	Dominant type of reading	Outcome of PCT performance
I. Information-seeking	I.1. To review and familiarize oneself with new areas of theoretical research and practical achievements in financial domain	Scanning → skimming → reading for details	Acquisition of new professional knowledge and experience
	I.2. To select external sources of information in accordance with the purpose of their subsequent application to solve professional tasks	Scanning, skimming	Compilation of a list of authoritative references
	I.3. To study information on specific aspects of one's own organization's financial activities and the financial performance of potential partners / competitors; to analyze the causes and consequences of successful / unsuccessful financial policies on this basis; to summarize the information obtained according to specific areas and criteria	Reading for details	Preparation of financial reports / reviews; Compilation of information base for management decision-making
II. Information-behavioral	II.1. To forecast financial market conditions when developing a financial strategy by studying the main trends in the development of the financial market, analyzing and evaluating them	Skimming → reading for details	Preparation of a report on the state of the financial market; Preparation of a financial forecast; Making managerial decisions
	II.2. To plan the company's financial activities across key areas, based on the results of the financial analysis and forecasting	Skimming → reading for details	Planning financial activities; Making managerial decisions
	II.3. To study, analyze, evaluate and select the optimal directions and methods of financial management	Skimming → reading for details	Making managerial decisions

on the main methods for creating problem-based tasks within the framework of developing exercises for teaching reading in a foreign language, we identify the following ways of introducing problem-solving elements into the problem-based tasks modelled in the testing materials: 1) use of texts containing cognitive and analytical tasks created by the author themselves; 2) problematization the text; 3) creation of problem-based tasks, the successful resolution of which relies on the effective use of information obtained during the reading process. Let us examine these in greater detail.

The use of texts with inherent cognitive tasks (1) is explained by the presence of various forms of implicitness in the English financial texts, including multi-component modified phrases (including elliptical ones), complex contractions and abbreviations, the absence of an explicitly stated connection between two contiguous statements, the omission of a logical link in the text, an entire proposition, problems left unresolved or only partially resolved, implicitly presented information, the absence of a generalising conclusion, and so on.

By 'problematization of the text' (2) we mean the prior preparation or processing of the text for reading by the teacher / test developer with the aim of artificially creating the necessary contradictions and conflicts within it through the use of appropriate techniques: a) creating the effect of information deficit; b) creating the effect of information abundance; c) creating the effect of contradictory information. Creating the effect of information deficit (2.a) involves the deliberate omission of individual letters within a word, individual words within a sentence, as well as sentences and paragraphs from various parts of the text, with or without indicating the places in the text where they should appear, and with or without specifying probable elements for substitution. Creating the effect of information abundance (2.b) involves adding superfluous sentences, paragraphs or text fragments to the text under consideration, or duplicating information by repeating the content of individual sentences, paragraphs or text fragments using other linguistic or extralinguistic means. The effect of contradictory information (2.c) is achieved by: a) introducing visual elements that fully or partially contradict the text's content; b) changing the order of individual fragments of a word, phrase, sentence or text, which requires regrouping in order to restore their integrity. For information-search problem-solving tasks, this involves reconstructing a word, sentence or text that has been broken into parts, deciphering an anagram, arranging the outline in the correct order, and restoring the logical sequence of the information presented in the text; c) the comparison of two texts that contradict each other in content or present opposing viewpoints on the same issue. Such situations arise when

a financier collects, analyses and evaluates large volumes of information from various sources.

Given the nature of the problem situations inherent in the professional activities of a financier, and with a view to creating problem-based tasks (3), we propose the following methods and techniques: a) generating a need to employ mental operations such as analysis / synthesis, specification / generalisation, grouping / categorisation, induction / deduction, abstraction, comparison, etc. Examples of problem-based learning tasks created in this way include: finding sources of information that may be needed to solve a specific professional task; evaluating the information obtained according to various criteria; identifying the common and distinguishing features of objects / phenomena, the advantages / disadvantages of particular methods, to compare certain objects according to pre-defined or undefined indicators, to predict the likely course of events and their consequences, to illustrate financial and economic phenomena with one's own examples, to summarise information from a text at various levels, create their own secondary text by summarizing what they have read or combining information from several sources, supplement the given text with their own evaluations and judgements, and make a managerial decision; b) generating a need to employ mathematical and logical operations, as well as operations involving the transformation of information presented in verbal form into non-verbal form and vice versa. Accordingly, problem-based learning tasks created using this technique involve: completing calculation tables; evaluating the accuracy and completeness of information presented extralinguistically; and drawing up diagrams by converting verbal information into graphical code (diagrams, tables, 'mind map'-type associative maps, logical text diagrams), etc. In our view, the use of texts with cognitive tasks and the problematization of texts should be incorporated when creating problem-based information-search communicative tasks, whilst the creation of problem-based tasks themselves should be employed when modelling information-behavioural communicative tasks.

The final step in modelling real-life communication situations in ESP reading is to provide the necessary contextual information regarding: 1) the role of the test-taker, which influences the nature of their attitude towards perceiving information and determines the course and outcome of the reading; 2) the general subject matter of the text and the field of professional or academic activity; 3) the circumstances under which the reading takes place; 4) the reasons and motivation for undertaking it; 5) the expected outcome of the reading or the product resulting from the use of the information acquired during the reading process. The sequence for modelling real-life communication situations in ESP reading by prospective financiers is shown in Figure 1.

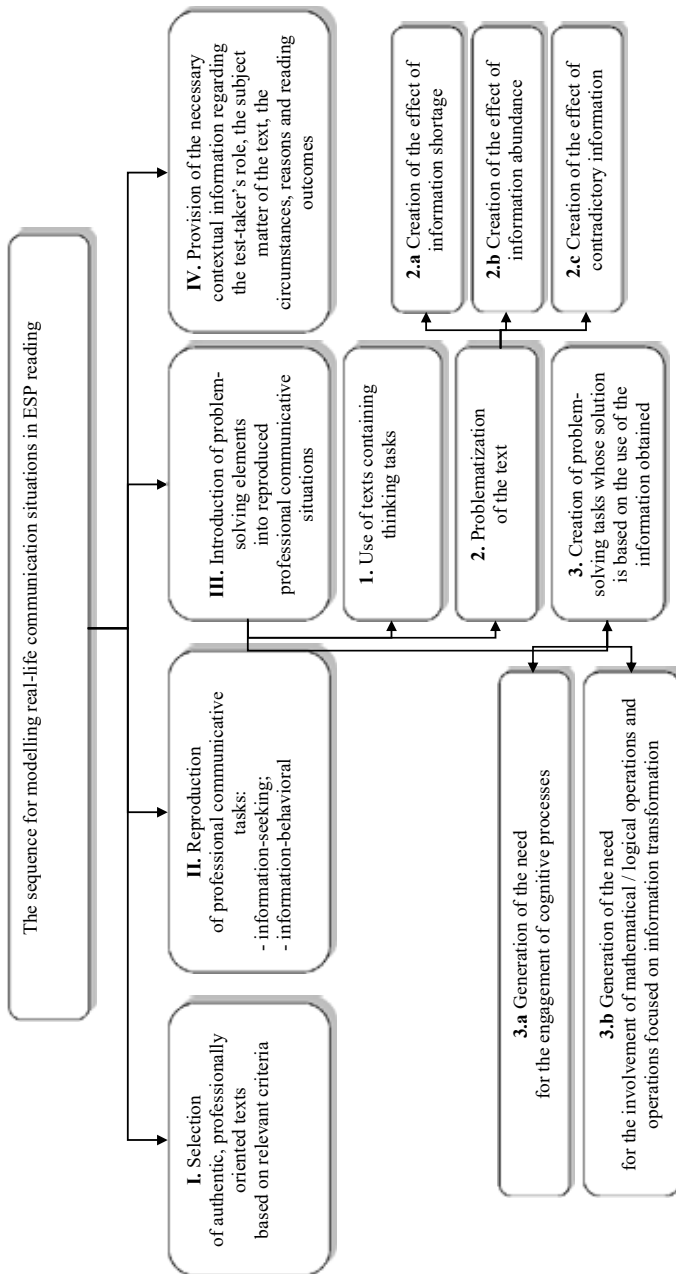


Fig. 1. Modelling the situations of real-life communication in ESP reading in the test tasks

3. Requirements for communicative test tasks in ESP reading

Finally, we summarise all of the above and the experience of our predecessors^{43, 44, 45, 46} in the form of requirements for communicative test task / tests in ESP reading: 1) reading tasks must be compiled on the basis of authentic specialized texts; 2) final test must be designed to measure the extent to which test-takers have developed the ability to apply their reading skills and competences to solve real-life problem-based tasks; 3) the instructions for the test must set out the problem-based task and contain the necessary contextual information; 4) the problem-based task set out in the test instructions must correspond in its characteristics to those problems solved by specialists in a particular field in real-life, non-test situations through ESP reading or in the course of such reading; 5) the choice of the type and form of the test tool and type must not only be consistent with the subject matter being assessed, but also guided by the specific nature of the simulated problem-based communication task and the methods and techniques used to develop it; 6) the test item should encourage test-takers to demonstrate precisely those behavioural patterns that are observed in real-life communication situations whilst solving similar problem-solving tasks, and, consequently, require the application of relevant language skills and competences, subject-specific / expert knowledge, and take into account the motivational and emotional aspects of the target group of test-takers; 7) the main criterion for assessing performance against the technical specifications is the students' achievement of a pragmatic outcome is the effective and productive resolution of the problem-based communication situation.

CONCLUSIONS

One of the promising ways to enhance the validity of the reading comprehension test in assessing the level of ESP reading proficiency among students of non-linguistic specialisms, including prospective financiers, is the application of the communicative approach to testing. Its implementation in assessing reading proficiency in ESP reading involves simulating situations of real-life mediated communication in English, integral to direct professional or academic activities whilst reading in testing context. The sequence for

⁴³ Петрашук О. П. *Теоретичні основи контролю інішомовної комунікативної компетенції учнів середньої загальноосвітньої школи* : дис. ... доктора пед. наук : 13.00.02. К., 2000. 553 с.

⁴⁴ Bachman L. F. *Language Testing in Practice: Designing and Developing Useful Language Tests*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. 377 p.

⁴⁵ Douglas D. *Assessing Language for Specific Purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 311 p.

⁴⁶ Hughes A. *Testing for Language Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. 172 p.

modelling real-life communication situations in ESP reading by finance students involves: 1) the selection of English-language specialist texts, carried out according to general and specific criteria; 2) the reproduction of information-search and information-behavioural communicative tasks in the test conditions; 3) the introduction of a problem-solving dimension to the simulated reading tasks through the use of texts containing cognitive tasks devised by the author, the problematization of the texts, and the creation of problem-based tasks, the solution of which requires the effective use of information acquired during the reading process; 4) the incorporation of the necessary contextual information in the instructions for the test items regarding the role of the test-taker, the circumstances and reasons for engaging in reading activities, and the expected outcome or product of their completion.

The findings of this study can be utilised in compiling a bank of testing tasks in ESP reading by prospective financiers, developing the structure and content of the reading sections of thematic, modular and summative tests, and creating a model for implementing the assessed testing system within the context of a modern higher education institution.

SUMMARY

Effective assessment is the key to productive teaching and learning in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) domain. In this context, the quality of the assessment results strongly depends on the combination of different external and internal factors, including the quality of the developed assessment tools and procedures. Consequently, the effective testing of students' ESP reading skills requires the development of the communicative test tasks which reflect the situations of real-life communication through professionally-oriented authentic English texts. Therefore, this chapter aims to present and specify the main ways to develop communicative test tasks in ESP reading for prospective financiers.

Based on the analysis of typical situations of professional indirect communication in reading in the financial domain, the following sequence for modeling real-life communication features in the test tasks has been determined. It includes the following steps: 1) selection of English authentic professional texts; 2) reproduction of professional communicative tasks of an information-seeking and information-behavioral type as those predominant in reading within the professional/academic sphere of a financier's activity; 3) introduction of problem-solving elements into the simulated professional communicative tasks; 4) provision of the necessary contextual information. The list of text selection criteria was specified. The content, dominant types of reading, and final outcomes of the two types of professional communicative tasks to be reproduced in the test tasks were presented. The ways to develop

a problem-based test task in ESP reading were outlined. The aspects of the necessary contextual information to be provided in the test task were listed.

Bibliography

1. Барабанова Г. В. Когнітивно-комунікативна модель навчання професійно орієнтованого читання іноземною мовою в немовному вузі. *Іноземні мови*. 2004. №1. С. 29–30.
2. Квасова О. Г. *Основи тестування іношомовних навичок і вмінь* : [навчальний посібник]. К. : Ленвіт, 2009. 119 с.
3. Король Т. Г. Врахування особливостей тесту Cambridge ICFE при створенні системи тестового контролю англomовної компетенції у читанні. *Вісник КНЛУ. Серія : педагогіка та психологія*. 2009. Вип. 16. С. 41–50.
4. Король Т. Г. Реалізація комунікативного підходу до тестового контролю іношомовної компетенції у читанні студентів немовних спеціальностей. *Вісник Чернігівського державного педагогічного університету імені Т. Г. Шевченка. Серія : педагогічні науки : Збірник*. 2009. Вип. 70. С. 112–115.
5. Король, Т. Г. *Система тестового контролю англomовної компетенції у читанні фахової літератури майбутніми фінансистами*: дис. ... канд. пед. наук: 13.00.02. Київ, 2012. 394 с.
6. Малюга О. С. *Навчання професійно орієнтованого читання наукових англomовних текстів студентів-магістрів аграрних спеціальностей* : дис. ... канд. пед. наук : 13.00.02. К., 2007. 217 с.
7. Петрашук О. П. *Теоретичні основи контролю іношомовної комунікативної компетенції учнів середньої загальноосвітньої школи* : дис. ... доктора пед. наук : 13.00.02. К., 2000. 553 с.
8. *Програма з англійської мови для професійного спілкування* / Г. Є. Бакаєва, О. А. Борисенко, І. І. Зуєнок та ін. К. : Ленвіт, 2005. 119 с.
9. Складенко Н. К. Принципи формування іношомовної комунікативної компетенції. *Мова культура й освіта у сучасному світі: [збірник наукових праць до 90-річчя доктора філологічних наук, професора Романовського О.К.]* / Відп. ред. Стишов О. А. К. : Вид. центр КНЛУ, 2008. С. 237–242.
10. Тарнопольський О. Б. *Методика навчання англійської мови на II курсі технічного вузу* : [посібник] К. : Вища школа, 1993. 167 с.
11. Bachman L. F. *Language Testing in Practice: Designing and Developing Useful Language Tests*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. 377 p.
12. Bachman L. F., Palmer A. S. *Language Testing in Practice: Designing and Developing Useful Language Tests*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. 377 p.

13. Brantmeier C. Effects of reader's knowledge, text type, and test type on L1 and L2 reading comprehension in Spanish. *Modern Language Journal*. 2005. Vol. 89. P. 37–53.
14. Brown J. D. *Testing in language programs*. New Jersey, USA: Prentice Hall International, 1996. 324 p.
15. Douglas D. *Assessing Language for Specific Purposes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. 311 p.
16. Douglas D. *Understanding language testing*. L., UK: Hodder Education, 2010. 156 p.
17. Duong T. M., Truong M. L. Task-based language teaching: A possible remedy for Vietnamese EFL students' ESP reading comprehension at a vocational college. *Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Studies*. 2022. № 22(2). P. 291–306.
18. Grabe W. *Reading in a Second Language: Moving from theory to Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. 467 p.
19. Heine L. *Problem Solving in a Foreign Language*. Berlin, NY: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co. KG, 2010. 217 p.
20. Hughes A. *Testing for Language Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. 172 p.
21. *Implicit and Explicit Knowledge in Second Language Learning, Testing and Teaching* / [Ellis R., Loewen S., Elder C. et al]; ed. by D. Singleton. Bristol, Buffalo, Toronto: Multilingual Matters, 2009. 391 p.
22. Koda K. *Insights into Second Language Reading: A Cross-Linguistic Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. 319 p.
23. Krekeler C. Designing complex LSP tasks for assessment purposes. *The Journal of Teaching English for Specific and Academic Purposes*. 2018. Vol. 6, № 2, Special Issue. P. 225–233.
24. Lewkowicz J. Authenticity in language testing: some outstanding questions. *Language Testing*. 2000. Vol. 17 (1). P. 43–64.
25. Mămăligă A. Developments in ESP testing practice: Test design. *Culegere de articole selectiv ale Conferinței Științifice Internaționale „Competitivitatea și Inovarea în Economia Cunoașterii”*, 22–23 septembrie 2017, Chișinău, Vol. II. P. 164–168.
26. Milton J. *Measuring Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition*. Bristol, Buffalo, Toronto: Multilingual Matters, 2009. 278 p.
27. Norris J. M. Current Uses for Task-Based Language Assessment. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*. 2016. №36 (2016). P. 230–244.
28. Nunan D. *Task-based Language Teaching*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 222 p.

29. Shiotsu T. *Components of L2 Reading: Linguistic and processing factors in the reading test performances of Japanese EFL learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 232 p.

30. Weir C. J. *Language testing and validation: an evidence-based approach*. L.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. 320 p.

Information about the author:

Korol Tetiana,

Doctor of Sciences in Education,
Associate Professor at the Department of General Linguistics
and Foreign Languages,
National University “Yuri Kondratyuk Poltava Polytechnic”
24, Vitaliia Hrytsaienka Street, Poltava, Ukraine