

EFFECTIVE METHODS FOR TEACHING READING IN ENGLISH CLASSES

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Abstract: *In the sum of our research, it is revealed that the differentiated method can become a new stage in the development of the methodology for teaching the technique of reading in English, since; on the one hand, the training will be based on the peculiarities of English spelling. On the other hand, this method will make it possible to build a system of exercises taking into account the reading skills formed in the students' native language. A rational distribution of attention between exercises aimed at training skills that are subject to positive transfer and skills that have an interfering effect will help prevent students from developing reading errors.*

Keywords: *lecture, methodology, differentiated method, narrative method, methodical reading*

It is for us, in this communication¹, to put in critical perspective a central exercise in the teaching of French in high school: methodical reading. This school exercise has the particularity of being an "intermediate" and deeply paradoxical didactic object. Indeed, it is not taught nor, therefore, practiced by students who pass the CAPES, subject, again, to the exercises that the Lansonian tradition has bequeathed to us: the dissertation and the explanation of linear text. Absent from the initial training of teachers, discovered in somewhat "rapid" continuing education courses, methodical reading has experienced, ten years after its birth, multiple technical drifts that many rightly regret. The causes of this "perversion" are multiple: teacher training that is truncated most of the time, a "technological" conception of reading, a naive belief in the omnipotence of a purely inductive approach, a "logico-grammatical problem"² which never ceases to affirm, in the mode of incantation, the objectivity of a meaning immanent to the text.

We would like to show – by making it, shall we say, with a bit of humour, a close methodical reading – that the Official Instructions which defined methodical reading have a certain responsibility in this process of reification and desiccation that we have just mentioned, and this despite declared intentions, which are very laudable and at first sight innovative.

Indeed, reading the Official Instructions³ produces curious impressions in any reader. Initially, we find all our concerns there, and we can only welcome such an initiative. However, it seems difficult not to wonder about the reasons why these official texts did not succeed in preventing a use of the interpretation of texts that was to say the least reprehensible. And this all the more so since a reading, attentive to the very letter of the prescriptive statements, is not far from convincing us that, in a

certain way, the I.O., have, indirectly, encouraged these drifts, because they involve relatively large number of ambiguities, things left unsaid and contradictions.

Instructions and program: general presentation

The general objectives of teaching English are, at university, the reasoned practice of the language, the formation of a culture, the acquisition of methods of thought and work⁴.

Note, in passing, that the continuity of learning will be constantly recalled, and that from the beginning of the official text appears the word /method/. The three stated objectives are taken up, with some nuances, by the sub-chapters of each part.

Objectif	I. Instructions	II. Program
Reasoned language practice	A) Reasoned language practice - communication and expression	A) Reasoned language practice - communication and expression
Formation of a culture	B) The study of texts	B) Textes
Acquisition of thinking and working methods	C) Methods and general training	
	D) Progress and goals	

Our table⁵ shows that for I.O. there is an equivalence between the “formation of a culture”, “the study of texts”, and “texts”. We will have to come back to it. Methodical reading is the fundamental exercise in English at university, but it is evolving and cannot be academically fixed once and for all; this is undoubtedly why it gives rise to debates and polemics and it is precisely because of this flexibility and this diversity that computer science can constitute an important aid to its learning.

The work presented here was carried out in a class of Second in the second trimester, that is to say once the students were introduced to the different "tools" allowing the study of the literary text. At this stage, it is a question of helping them to choose judiciously the one or those that seem to them best suited to a particular text. It can also, if desired, be used partially to help acquire these different “tools”.

The software used is a hypertext generator, Polygraphe¹ from which the teacher has established the file on which the students will work. This work takes place in modules, in groups of two students per machine. Presentation and commentary on the proposed example The text chosen is an extract from “1984”, by George Orwell, the description of Winston (Part IV, Book III, Chapter 3) which appears in the textbook used by the pupils (Literature, 2nd , texts and methods, Hatier, p.271), which allows them to always have the text in front of them in its entirety.

The first screen includes the entire text and, next to it, 8 study proposals: the lexical fields; verb tense; the decor ; similes and metaphors; other writing processes; the type of text; characters ; the composition of the text.

The order of these propositions is purely random; they correspond to different aspects of the literary text previously studied with the pupils. They make it possible to examine one of these aspects of the text; the pupils choose the entries which seem to

them the most useful and in the order which they wish. They are asked to note this order.

By clicking on the entry of their choice, the students see another screen appear on which they are offered specific instructions and two "buttons" which allow them either to do the study directly if they feel capable of doing so (they can type the answer in the provided editor), or to use help. In this case, the text reappears with certain words highlighted by colours: the examination of these words generally allows the pupils to find the answer. Sometimes a remark and/or a suggestion directs their thinking more or refers to another more relevant entry.

The screen called by Type of text is the one that the students can obtain directly by this entry if they chose it at the beginning of the exercise.

Sometimes, a more specific question is asked: by entering Composition, then Help, the students obtain a vision of the text whose different parts are highlighted by colours; at the same time, they are asked to justify the division proposed and to specify the progression.

In all cases, the students are then asked to write their answer (training for written commentary) and to be able to present it orally (training for the oral test).

Some of the suggested entries are not suitable for this particular text: it is up to the pupils to judiciously select the aspects of the text that will best allow them to account for it in a methodical reading; if they are wrong, however, a red box appears explaining why the entry they have chosen is not relevant and possibly offering them something else.

The screen called by Writing process is the one that the students can get directly from this entry if they chose it at the beginning of the exercise.

Utilisation

After this research and writing work, each group of two students presents their work orally to the class, which must then think about an organization of the whole with the help of the teacher. The file is available to students who can consult it whenever they want (as part of the modules or a resource centre) or even copy it.

The process is repeated several times during the year of Second, the first screen always remaining presented in the same way whatever the text in order to make the pupils understand that the first stage of the methodical reading as of the composed commentary is to choose well which aspects of the text to study and not to apply indiscriminately what one knows to all the texts.

The file can be used as preparation for an assignment on a Bac type table in first class in the case where modules are available or, failing that, thanks to overhead projection.

Specific contributions of the approach

It combines a real rigor in the approach of the literary text with the freedom and intuition of the student who chooses as he wants one or more entries but must then

justify and exploit his choices; it allows trial and error, conditions for learning when they are well managed.

The possible approaches are diverse and the students are truly active, which is not always the case in the case of a single approach to the text under the guidance of the teacher. The rhythm of the work is that of the discovery of the text by the pupils, each at their own speed.

The teacher is available to help the different groups of students in the most delicate task: constructing an interpretation of a literary text from precise observations.

The approach can be scalable, the list of proposed entries varying, if desired, according to the knowledge of the class and the knowledge of the pupils; once the method has been acquired, it is important, in fact, that this type of work does not become a conditioning but that new avenues are constantly opened up: versification, literary genre, tonalities, literary history...

Combining rigor and flexibility, allowing repetitions and variations of rhythm, the help of computers takes on its full meaning here: making students autonomous in the face of the literary text.

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