DEVELOPING EFL STUDENTS' WRITING AWARENESS: THE QUEST FOR EFFECTIVE APPROACH

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І.А.Лівицька. Пошук ефективних шляхів підвищення рівня усвідомленого письма у студентів, які вивчають англійську як іноземну мову..

Стаття є спробою теоретичного узагальнення сучасних методологічних підходів до підвищення рівня усвідомленого навчання писемного мовлення студентів, які вивчають англійську мову як іноземну. Через взаємопов'язаний аналіз понять «жанр писемного мовлення», «усвідомлення стратегій письма» та «динамічні ментальні моделі» письмових завдань, ця розвідка перевіряє дві гіпотези: 1) студенти не пов'язують відсутність знань про жанрові особливості писемного мовлення із загальним рівнем володіння іноземною мовою, натомість надають особливої уваги формуванню лексичних та граматичних навичок як основних компонентів мовленнєвої компетенції; 2) процес письма у студентів, які вивчають англійську мову як іноземну, ускладнюється наявністю нетипових для їхньої рідної мови риторичних форм, що, в свою чергу, знижує доступ до короткотермінової робочої пам'яті та негативно впливає на якість писемного тексту іноземною мовою. Як результат, пропонується ефективний підхід підвищення рівня навчальної усвідомленості письмових стратегій студентами шляхом ефективно-орієнтованого підходу.

Ключові слова: усвідомленість, динамічні ментальні моделі письма, англійська мова як іноземна, стратегії писемного мовлення, жанрово-орієнтовані завдання, ефективно-орієнтованого підхід.

И.А.Ливицкая. Поиск эффективного пути развития осознанной письменной речи у студентов, изучающих английский как иностранный язык.

В статье проанализированы современные методологические подходы к способам повышению уровня осознанности письменной речи студентов, которые изучают английский язык как иностранный. Основными аспектами анализа выступают понятия осознанности студентами письменных особенностей различных жанров английской письменной речи и их взаимосвязь с динамическими ментальными моделями, которые необходимы для выполнения заданий различных письменных жанров.

Ключевые слова: осознанность, динамические ментальные модели, английский язык как иностранный, стратегии письма, жанрово-ориентованные задания, эффективно-ориентированный подход.

The study represents an attempt to suggest plausible methodological ways of raising writing awareness of the students learning English as a foreign language. The two aspects addressed in this paper include students' awareness of the strategies for written genres of English as a foreign language and their relation to dynamic mental models of writing while approaching a task in EFL/L2 settings.

Keywords: awareness, dynamic mental models of writing, English as a foreign language, writing strategies, genre-based tasks, efficacy-focused instruction.

Introduction

Students' writing in a foreign language, especially the writing of essays, compositions, dissertations and theses, is often viewed in the literature as "dynamic cyclical process", an active creation of new knowledge where the writer has to negotiate his or her identity, performing a set of mental procedures and cognitive processes required for a particular genre. This view on writing totally contradicts with earlier understanding of writing as a linear, straightforward process [2], compared to relatively passive assembling of ideas, putting them into the necessary order and then, finally, reading the text and making alterations where needed. Recognizing cognition and writing as two closely related processes, we underline that it overlaps considerably with the models of writing used by L1 and L2 learners of English and causes considerable influence on the type of written product. Students' awareness of writing strategies of a certain genre as such may contribute positively to "knowledge transformation", or, inhibit the process of "knowledge creation" turning it into a mere "knowledge telling" [4].

The aim of this paper is to outline cognitive processes used by EFL/L2 learners of English on their way to achieve a task and produce a written product, conceptualizing academic writing as a set of *dynamic mental models* (DMM) and writing strategies. This includes a consideration of, for example, academic writing as constructing of "knowledge transformation", as well as shaping and reshaping ideas.

In terms of *effective instruction* of writing in EFL/L2 academic settings students should be aware of what genres of writing involve, what variety of internal cognitive processes should be used

in order to produce a text and what extra-linguistic factors (writing-relevant knowledge) affect the quality of written product.

1. Method

Investigating models of writing and cognitive behavior in previous issue [8:p.142], we concluded our paper with the suggestion to minimize the so-called "gap between declarative knowledge (i.e. theoretical) and procedural one (i.e. practical) [12], provoking the necessity of raising students' awareness for the writing process in terms of how they write, what strategies they use or what they think they use (reflection on writing).

In present paper, we will suggest two hypotheses, originated from the mentioned above distinction between "declarative" and "procedural" knowledge, and will try to /re/confirm them by illustration of the analytic review of relevant research.

The **hypothesis I** of this paper: EFL/L2 students are generally not aware of the genre aspect of the L2 writing; instead they tend to consider their level of the English language grammatical and lexical competence (linguistic skill) as a prerequisite of their English writing ability.

The **hypothesis II** of this paper: The performance of the written tasks by L2/EFL students demands higher order cognitive skills and rhetorical patterns, considerably different from their native language (L1), that causes considerable constrains in accessing "short-term working memory" information and leads to writing as a "knowledge telling" process.

These two hypotheses may provide a viable explanation why students in L2 settings struggle with their English writing. They lack *awareness* of the compositional aspect of the English writing and they do not view their English written text as a means of communication, on the one hand, and little knowledge about cognitive processes prevents them from fully controlling their writing, on the other.

Therefore, if to raise students' awareness about writing compositional strategies, emphasising the communicative purpose of writing in English and to provide students with the self-observation strategies to use while their own writing, the students could facilitate their English writing most effectively.

Thus, the two aspects will be addressed further: students' awareness of the genre strategies for written composition in English as a foreign language and their relation to cognitive models of writing while approaching a task in L2/EFL settings.

2. Context

Following previous research on writing in L2 or S/EFL contexts (Flower,1990; Manchon & Roca de Larios, 2011;Wolfersberger,2007) has traditionally represented two strands: *product-oriented*, focused more on the result of the task, i.e. the quality of the fulfillment of the written task; and *process-oriented*, viewing "writing as a discovery process" (Hayes's notion), consisting of (1) long-term components (those, which develop over time) and (2) components of each individual act of writing. Thus, the arrangement of these elements constituted the interrelated mixture of physical, affective and social elements with cognitive ones [1].

Product-based approach in language writing research stimulated a whole range of mixed-result investigations concerning development of formal language when writing (Shaw&Lin, 1998), measuring gains in linguistic accuracy (Storch&Tapper, 2009), improvement in overall language proficiency (Elder&O'Loughlin, 2003), and development of written performance (Green&Weir,2003) [11]. Distinctive argument of this bulk of research is that development of writing skill is connected with increasing fluency of linguistic processes involved in text production [10: p.54], differentiating expert (experienced) from inexpert (novice) writers in their access to "short term working memory" (further on STWM) (ibid). If this statement is plausible, we will have to search for the answer "How to ease the access of L2/EFL writers to their STWM resources while writing?".

The answer to this question will necessitate further research on interrelation between, roughly speaking, *"internal side"* (which includes cognitive models of writing, task representation and "schemata" brain storage, long-term and short-term working memory) and *"outer side"* of writing (learning environment, writing instruction and assessment, teacher's proficiency and conventions of academic discourse).

Adhering to writing as a process-oriented procedure will lead us to the *"internal side"*, claiming that success of a writer depends on development of task schemas, meaning by them "packages of information stored in long-term memory that specify how to carry out a particular task" [6;p.24]. "Task schemas include information about task goals, the processes necessary for accomplishing the task, sequencing the processes, and evaluating the success of the task" [13: p. 28].

One more theoretical frame, supporting essential role of "writing-relevant knowledge" in writing competence, was suggested by D. McCutchen in her article "From novice to expert: Implications of language skills and writing-relevant knowledge for memory during the development of writing skill" [10: p.52]. McCutchen estimates that, initially operations of the linguistic processes and writing-relevant knowledge (e.g. genre-knowledge, etc) are constrained by the "short-term working memory" (STWM), but with the increase of linguistic skill and writing-relevant knowledge, constrains of STWM give way to long-term working memory resources.

It gives us grounds to hypothesise that, if to raise the students' awareness about writing compositional strategies (writing-relevant knowledge), and to provide them with the self-observation strategies to use while their own writing, the students could facilitate their English writing most effectively. And the starting point in this awareness raising process is *task schemas*, which include information about task goals, the processes necessary for accomplishing the task, and successful completion of the task.

3. Task representation in writing

The concepts of genre, task schemas and writing strategies play the most important role in this paper. Correspondently, for language learners they introduce the notions of genre awareness, linguistic knowledge, beliefs and goals of writing and writing competence in foreign language settings.

Investigating writer's task representations, we will touch upon such notions as beliefs about writing task and implications for the composing (Flower,1990; Ruiz-Funes,2001; Wolfersberger,2007). Following Flower's definition, we will stick to the view on *task representation* as a problem-solving process that involves the interpretation of the rhetorical problem set by the task, the goals pursued by the writer, and the strategies used for composing [11: p.2].

By approaching the written task, a learner/reader triggers the mental process of critical thinking defining the corresponding goals and efficient means for their successful completion, which is schematically represented in Figure 1.

Figure 1.

This conceptualisation of the task representation reminds psychological view on mental models [11: p.2] seen as individual cognitive representations used to achieve a goal: solve a problem or provide argument, reasoning (Doyle, Ford, Radzicki&Tress,2002). Being occupied with a problem-solving situation (as a writing task, for instance) each individual has a certain system of beliefs on how to approach it. Exposed to time and learning, this system undergoes changes and adaptations, forming in such a way *dynamic mental models* corresponding to each concrete task.

These *dynamic mental models* can be considered similar to the so-called "working models" [7] or dynamic network of beliefs exposed to time and to learning.

Different attempts have been made to investigate task representation in writing, including explorations in reading-to-write tasks, in various cognitive task interpretations etc. What unites all these attempts is a consideration for "task representation" as a core element of *mental models* [6], activating a network of goals for composing a certain genre of academic writing, provoking a necessity of genre-awareness among student-writers.

4. Genre awareness

To define **genre** we will draw on *systemic functional linguistics* (SFL), which sees language as a resource for making meaning in a particular context of use rather than as a set of fixed rules and structures [5]. In SFL theory, developing language ability is associated with the expansion of

registers, including the acquisition of genres representing different institutional, educational, and professional settings.

Growing number of research in genre-based writing pedagogy (e.g. Belcher, 1994,2004; Byrnes, Crane, Maxim, &Sprang,2006; Flowerdew,2002; Matsuda, 2003; Hyland&Warschauer, 2003; Paltridge, 1996,1997, 2001, 2002, 2004; Swales, 1990;) advocates promoting L2/EFL writers' understanding of the relationship between the communicative purpose and the audience (i.e. the reader) as the main characteristics of the genre-based approach.

Becoming two main variables of the writing process, the purpose and the audience as a duo help writers correctly perform social actions (Pasquarelli,2006).

But, for novice writers, the process of building genre-awareness is complicated by the following:

(1) many writers are not able to detect global problems (i.e. content and organization) due to poor reading skills;

(2) a capacity of working memory doesn't allow them to focus at the same time on both local (sentence-level) and global (content-level) errors;

(3) L2/EFL writers may not have developed correspondent schema for revision, due to misinterpretation of the task [14:p.28].

In addition, writing experience of L2/EFL writers is often limited to grammar use and vocabulary exercises (Sasaki & Hirose, 1996), with less attention being paid to pragmatic issues of written genres and their communicative purposes. Such culture of schooling, as estimates Yasuda [18], encourages L2/EFL writers consider writing tasks devoid of any peculiar context and social function, and prevents them from effective building of adequate task schemas.

On the contrary, if to provide explicit instruction in the social functions of genres to inexperienced EFL/L2 writers, they will view writing as a social action performed through interactions of purpose, audience, and linguistic choice. The empirical study [18] conducted with the aim to link *genre to task* has proven effectiveness of such an approach. During a fifteen-week writing course, undergraduate students were engaged in carefully designed genre-based tasks, where they learned different linguistic resources to be used for different genres. Systemic analysis of these linguistic recourses, states Yasuda, may heighten students' awareness of the interrelation between the goals of the genre and the linguistic resources to realize them, thus, "serve as a springboard for novice FL writers to develop both writing competence and linguistic knowledge simultaneously" [18:p.113].

Thus, the **hypothesis II** of this paper is gains its probability. The performance of the written tasks by L2/EFL students demands higher order cognitive skills and rhetorical patterns, considerably different from their native language (L1), that causes considerable constrains in accessing "short-term working memory" information and leads to writing as a "knowledge telling" process. "Knowledge telling" writing strategy should be viewed here not as a worse type of writing, but as a simplified cognitive process of putting meaning into which compensates for insufficient language resources (linguistic and writing-relevant knowledge). But it raises a further question of linguistic knowledge development and its connection with writing strategies, which we will discuss below.

5. Linguistic knowledge and academic literacy

The genre approach to teaching writing focuses on teaching particular kinds of texts, or genres: *academic* (genres used in academic discourses and communities) and *non-academic* (genres used in discourses of personal communication). The practical realization of this approach lies in constructing a genre-based syllabus that will include a list of written genres, including relevant discourse – and language-level features and contextual information in relation to them. And the starting point of the syllabus is the genre, rather than the lower aspects of language that are also focused on in the program [12:pp. 69-70].

We support the view that the realization of this genre-based approach in writing is based on the notion of *scaffolding* [15] and *gradual approximation* [17]; that is, the view that modelling and guided practice are the best variants of learning. Thus, model texts are particularly important in genre-based classrooms as they provide an example of a certain genre, serve as a source of analysis of a given genre, and pave a way for parallel texts creation.

Alongside with the proven effectiveness of social-constructivism in the development of writing competence, some researchers justly underline that it is not sufficient to expose learners to academic practices or presenting them with "good" examples (Howes, 1999; Johns, 1997). Instead, they hypothesise essential aspects in writing pedagogy, which are often overlooked in the research of linguistic knowledge and academic literacy: they include students' comfort and confidence in their knowledge and abilities, which can be obtained through *efficacy-focused approach to instruction*, "that is one, that targets awareness, knowledge, skills, and related affect as a means of socializing students into the norms, values, and expectations of academic discourse" [16: p.29]. Viewed as "a two-way investment" of academic staff and students, acquiring academic literacy becomes a responsibility of students and teachers, for clarifying expectations and making necessary adjustments where needed [9]. But to become successful participants of the academic discourse, the students should learn the linguistic norms that constitute the academic discourse in order to become academically literate.

6. Conclusion: implications for teaching academic writing

In this study, we examined possible ways of raising EFL students' awareness in academic writing. Providing analytic review of relevant research two about "declarative" and "procedural" knowledge, we confirmed:

Issue 1: EFL/L2 students consider their level of the English language grammatical and lexical competence (linguistic skill) as a prerequisite of their English writing ability, not taking into account pragmatic characteristics of academic genres.

Pedagogical implications for this issue 1:

1) provide explicit instruction in the social functions of genres to inexperienced EFL/L2 writers, to view writing as a social action performed through interactions of purpose, audience, and linguistic choice;

2) introduce *efficacy-focused approach to instruction*, targeting awareness, knowledge, skills, and related affect as a means of socializing students into the norms, values, and expectations of academic discourse.

Issue 2: The performance of the written tasks by L2/EFL students demands higher order cognitive skills and rhetorical patterns, considerably different from their native language (L1), that causes considerable constrains in accessing "short-term working memory" information and leads to writing as a "knowledge telling" process.

Pedagogical implications for this issue 2:

1) to raise students' awareness about writing compositional strategies, emphasising the communicative purpose of writing in English and to provide students with the self-observation strategies to use while their own writing, the students could facilitate their English writing most effectively;

2) to incorporate genre-based approach in writing, *scaffolding* [15] and *gradual approximation* [17]; to insure modelling and guided practice for inexperienced writers.

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ВІДОМОСТІ ПРО АВТОРА

Інна Лівицька – кандидат філологічних наук, доцент кафедри англійської мови та методики її викладання Центральноукраїнського державного педагогічного університету імені Володимира Винниченка.

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МОВЛЕННЄВА КУЛЬТУРА – ВАЖЛИВА СКЛАДОВА УСПІШНОЇ ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ ДІЯЛЬНОСТІ СУЧАСНОГО ФАХІВЦЯ

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Т.В. Ліштаба. Мовленнєва культура – важлива складова успішної професійної діяльності сучасного фахівця.

Однією з важливих складових іміджу компетентного спеціаліста є культура мовлення загалом і культура професійного мовлення зокрема. Сьогодні, в епоху загальної інформатизації суспільства, украй важливо не тільки бути добре обізнаним у вузькій спеціальній сфері, а й уміти правильно формулювати думку, представляти її. Часто брак мовленнєвої практики стає на заваді вирішенню різноманітних робочих питань. Уміння створювати грамотні фахові тексти, проводити переговори, переконувати співрозмовника є запорукою успішної професійної діяльності. Саме таким потребам і відповідає зміст статті, метою якої є розглянути питання розвитку культури мовлення в студентів немовних спеціальностей педагогічних вищих навчальних закладів як складової професійної культури фахівців у процесі їх підготовки. У цьому зв'язку розкривається коло питань, які відносяться до культури мовлення, зокрема дослідження академічного мовлення. Надається аналіз наукових джерел, присвячених методичним пошукам ефективних шляхів підвищення рівня культури мовлення майбутніх фахівців. Пропонуються завдання для розвитку мовленнєвих умінь і навичок. Підкреслюється головна роль сучасного викладача – допомогти студентові оволодіти культурою мовлення, скоректувати його кроки на шляху пізнання норм мовленнєвого спілкування.

Ключові слова: *культура мовлення, мовна норма, фахівець, професійне спілкування, ділове мовлення, комунікативна підготовка.*

Т.В.Лиштаба. Культура речи – важная составляющая успешной профессиональной деятельности современного специалиста.

Одной из важных составляющих имиджа компетентного специалиста является культура речи вообще и культура профессиональной речи в частности. Сегодня, в эпоху всеобщей информатизации общества, крайне важно не только быть хорошо осведомленным в узкой специальной сфере, но и уметь правильно формулировать мысль, представлять ее. Часто недостаток речевой практики препятствует решению различных рабочих вопросов. Умение создавать грамотные профессиональные тексты, вести переговоры, убеждать собеседника является залогом успешной профессиональной деятельности. Именно таким потребностям и соответствует содержание статьи, целью которой является рассмотреть вопросы развития культуры речи у студентов неязыковых специальностей педагогических вузов как составляющей профессиональной культуры специалистов в процессе их подготовки. В этой связи раскрывается круг вопросов, относящихся к культуре речи, в частности исследования академического речи. Дается анализ научных источников,