

TEXT-BASED APPROACH TO WRITING DEVELOPMENT AT RUSSIAN AS A SECOND LANGUAGE LESSONS

ABORDAGEM BASEADA EM TEXTO PARA O DESENVOLVIMENTO DA ESCRITA NA RÚSSIA COMO AULAS DE SEGUNDA LÍNGUA

ENFOQUE BASADO EN TEXTOS PARA EL DESARROLLO DE LA ESCRITURA EN EL RUSO COMO SEGUNDA LENGUA LECCIONES

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ABSTRACT: The article is devoted to the usage of educational texts in writing skills development during Russian as a second language learning process. It is especially relevant for those who are taking higher education programs in Russia and in Russian. It discusses the main problems arising in working with various genres of written texts presented in modern textbooks on writing. Particular attention is paid to differences in work with reproductive and productive types of writing texts, as well as genres that are included in Test of Russian as a Foreign Language (TORFL). Various methods were used, such as comparative, analytical, descriptive and others. All the methods used allowed us to identify the distinctive features of sample texts offered in modern writing materials. An analysis of students' papers performed during the lessons, allowed us to draw a conclusion about the causes of errors. The article substantiates the possibility of including into the educational process a new genre of written texts - SMS messages. The relevance of this idea is explained by the existing trend of using electronic communication, as well as the wide distribution among students of various messenger applications, such as WhatsApp and others.

KEYWORDS: Writing. Russian as second language. Teaching. Sample text. Students.

RESUMO: *O artigo é dedicado ao uso de textos educacionais no desenvolvimento de habilidades de escrita durante o processo de aprendizagem do russo como segunda língua. É especialmente relevante para quem está cursando programas de ensino superior na Rússia e em russo. Ele discute os principais problemas que surgem no trabalho com vários gêneros de textos escritos apresentados em livros didáticos modernos sobre escrita. É dada atenção especial às diferenças no trabalho com tipos reprodutivos e produtivos de textos escritos, bem como aos gêneros incluídos no Teste de Russo como Língua Estrangeira (TORFL). Vários*

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métodos foram utilizados, tais como comparativo, analítico, descritivo e outros. Todos os métodos usados nos permitiram identificar as características distintivas de exemplos de textos oferecidos em materiais de escrita modernos. Uma análise dos trabalhos dos alunos realizados durante as aulas, permitiu-nos tirar uma conclusão sobre as causas dos erros. O artigo consubstancia a possibilidade de incluir no processo educacional um novo gênero de textos escritos - as mensagens SMS. A relevância desta ideia explica-se pela tendência existente de utilização da comunicação eletrônica, bem como pela ampla distribuição entre os alunos de vários aplicativos de serviços de mensagem, como WhatsApp e outros.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Escrita. Russo como segunda língua. Ensino. Texto de exemplo. Alunos.

RESUMEN: El artículo está dedicado al uso de textos educativos en el desarrollo de habilidades de escritura durante el proceso de aprendizaje del ruso como segunda lengua. Es especialmente relevante para aquellos que están cursando programas de educación superior en Rusia y en ruso. Se analizan los principales problemas que surgen al trabajar con varios géneros de textos escritos presentados en libros de texto modernos sobre escritura. Se presta especial atención a las diferencias en el trabajo con los tipos de textos de escritura reproductivos y productivos, así como a los géneros que se incluyen en la Prueba de ruso como lengua extranjera (TORFL). Se utilizaron varios métodos, como el comparativo, analítico, descriptivo y otros. Todos los métodos utilizados nos permitieron identificar las características distintivas de los textos de muestra que se ofrecen en los materiales de escritura modernos. Un análisis de los trabajos de los estudiantes realizados durante las lecciones, nos permitió sacar una conclusión sobre las causas de los errores. El artículo fundamenta la posibilidad de incluir en el proceso educativo un nuevo género de textos escritos: los mensajes SMS. La relevancia de esta idea se explica por la tendencia existente de utilizar la comunicación electrónica, así como por la amplia distribución entre los estudiantes de diversas aplicaciones de mensajería, como WhatsApp y otras.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Escritura. Ruso como segundo idioma. Enseñanza. Texto de muestra. Estudiantes.

Introduction

Over the past decades in the methodology of teaching Russian as a second language the leading teaching principle has been the communicative one. According to this principle the learning process is becoming similar to the real communication, and text becomes not only a purpose, but also a means of teaching all types of speech activity.

In most of modern textbooks the material is organized according to the text-centered approach: text as the main communicative unit acquires the ability to serve in the teaching process as a basis for the formation of foreign language communicative competence in the unity of its receptive and reproductive sides. Text perception and text creating is the main purpose of RSL teaching. Acting as an object of forming on the basis of the text, skills are correlated with all kinds of speech activity (KLEMENTSOVA, 2012).

Being a didactic unit, text in the classroom can be used both for illustrative purposes; speech pattern of native speakers' communication (NOVIKOVA, 2008) and as an object for analysis. Thus, text performs several functions:

- cognitive;
- training;
- developing;
- communicative.

Nowadays the role of writing in foreign language teaching is gradually increasing. (SYCHYOVA, 2011). Generally in the practice of written language development educational texts are used (we take the term in a specialized meaning), they are characterized by a limited vocabulary and grammar patterns, which are determined by the stage of training, as well as by the scope of application (for example, academic writing course). If we consider them from the point of view of the common criteria for the educational texts in general (N.V. Bessmertnaya), we can state that the main ones are examples of the language, developing character and the presence of the studied linguistic phenomena; such parameters as relevance of the subject, genre-style diversity, problematic nature usually take second place.

If we evaluate these texts by the criterion of authenticity, we can say that they are mainly educational-authentic (NOSONOVICH, 1999). or adapted. Authentic texts for objective reasons (discrepancy of the linguistic material and the level of students) are extremely rare, they are mostly found in the course of academic writing (among the undergraduates and postgraduate students).

Methods

The theme and the object under studying are defining the research methods. We used the analytical method to study and analyze modern textbooks on writing. Using comparative method, we highlighted main features of the texts' samples presented in these textbooks. Analyzing their structure and language patterns, we are able to pick a few books, in our opinion, suitable to develop writing skills of the students. Special attention was paid to various types of written speech included in TORFL exam, such as essay and so on. In addition, descriptive method was used to give an idea of the importance of the sample texts in the teaching writing process.

Results and discussion

There are tasks for teaching productive and reproductive writing in today's educational and methodological developments. Let us consider the features of working with reproductive texts in RSL lessons.

Reproductive or secondary texts are those texts that contain processed information of the source text. To be able to convey the contents of the source text correctly, students must have the necessary level of Russian language proficiency, as well as appropriate text skills.

One of the first types of reproductive writing that students get acquainted with is written answers to text based questions. Starting from the primitive reproduction of the information given in the text, students gradually move on to complex tasks, in which they are required to perform transformation skills so that the answer corresponds grammatically to the question. We consider it appropriate to apply this kind of work at different stages of learning because it demonstrates how students understand the sentence and other syntactic units' organization. Another type of reproductive writing is to make questions to the text. Here, first of all, we work with the compressing text skills, its semantic centers highlighting and keywords searching. Let us consider an example of completing the assignment to the text “Их познакомила музыка” from the textbook “I write in Russian. Basic level”:

- 1) Когда и где Родион Щедрин проводил фестиваль музыки?
- 2) Кому Родион посвятил свой музыкальный фестиваль?
- 3) Почему Родион решил познакомиться с балериной?
- 4) Когда Родион и Майя поженились?
- 5) Сколько лет они живут вместе?

Here we clearly see that the student does not see the logical structure of the text well enough, he is not able to distinguish the main and secondary information. The features of the persons nomination do not comply with the norms of the Russian language. This error resulted from the text's content, in which there is a retrospective part, where only the names of the heroes are used. The student does not pay attention to the retrospection, but this error is useful for the formation of the skill of the correct use of people's denoting methods.

The following question plan has been compiled according to the text of task №39 from the “Golden pen” textbook (second-third certification level). It is proposed to make paragraph division of the text, and then to make questions to these paragraphs.

- 1) Что корреспондент делал?
- 2) Кто Владимир И.Р. – хозяин музея?
- 3) Что выставлен в его музее?

Errors are caused by the same reasons as in the first example - the student hardly distinguishes the main information and does not know the rules of using personal names. The construction of questions indicates that the level of language proficiency does not correspond to the level of complexity of the text and the textbook as a whole.

For the complex texts it is possible to start with the thesis plan. The greatest amount of difficulty is making a denominative plan, especially if the text does not allow the replacement of verbs by the verbal nouns with *-ние*. We prefer to use the question and thesis plans in the texts abstracting (including the preparation for TORFL-1 and TORFL-2), the question plan with its ability to maximal text compression can be used in preparation for retelling in “Speaking” subtext (TORFL-1 to TORFL-3).

Traditionally, one of the most complex types of reproductive text is a summary. In recent years we note that often students' errors are caused not only by language problems, but also by the lack of ability to reproduce the text perceived by ear and by reading both verbally and in writing form. Not all students consider this work interesting and advisable. In this case, the motivation depends on the purposes of the listener: if we are talking about preparing for TORFL, it is important to show that mastering of writing skills contributes to the development of monologic speech skills. From the point of view of assessing writing skills, it is optimal to work with the read text, since in this case the presence of lexical, grammatical and logical errors will not be associated with the listening problems. The analysis of the textbooks shows that the selection of texts for work on the summary is often does not meet one of the important criteria – to arouse the interest of the student (VARLAMOVA; BOCHINA; MIFTAKHOVA, 2016). If the subject matter of the text is not interesting to the audience, but those texts have good training potential, it is possible to shift the focus to achieving the result, set the parameters by which the answer will be evaluated (length, proximity to the original text, etc.).

Starting from TORFL-2 the knowledge of the language organization of texts of different stylistic affiliation is checked; from reproductive scientific texts there are the abstract in the “Vocabulary. Grammar” subtest. Work with the abstract usually begins with the analysis of sample texts, here we use authentic texts. By comparing several examples, we make the student to identify the main compositional components of the abstract. To consolidate the lexical and grammatical material, we ask students to create an abstract on their own, for example, an

abstract of their favorite book. It is possible to use an already existing foreign language text, but this should not be a translation, but the creation of an abstract in Russian – in accordance with the main compositional elements, with the inclusion of lexical and grammatical means typical for this genre. It is possible to invite students to pick up the abstract in Russian themselves and prepare on its basis a task to fill in the gaps (the missing elements should be a cliché).

Learning to write a summary is necessary, first of all, for those who receive higher education in Russian or are going to study graduate and postgraduate programs. Making a summary is usually included in the textbooks on language specialty. At this stage, in our opinion, it is possible to include authentic texts for B1 level. The source texts offered for making a summary in the textbooks are usually small in length and are often shortenings, therefore, the use of authentic texts is mandatory when it comes to work with graduate and postgraduate students. The selection of articles (texts) depends on the type of summary (informative summary or descriptive summary). Requirements are the presence of a clear structure, a minimum of the abstract component, the presence of illustrative material and an explicit expression of the author's position. For levels TORFL-2, TORFL-3 may be provided such a task, as the selection of the text for the summary in accordance with the requirements above. Here the presence of samples of both informative and descriptive summaries becomes very important. Study of the source and secondary text should be planned for homework, so there is no need to use small texts and the studying will be more effective. We note that the primary skills on making summary in Russian are acquired in preparation for the TORFL-1 exam. (GALEEV; HABIBULLINA, 2017). Here the selection of texts presents a certain difficulty for the teacher. According to the latest trends, the text source given in the “Writing” subtest should contain several points of view on any problem. Existing test preparation textbooks are created to meet other requirements, so they do not cover the needs of the course. It is not easy to find a publicistic authentic text that is linguistically and meaningfully corresponds with TORFL-1 requirements, so it is necessary to use an adaptation. It is possible to create a compilational educational text on the basis of several sources united by one problem. Preparing a sample text attention should be paid to the variety of means of entering information concerning a particular point of view, to the ways of expressing an opinion on the similarities and differences in the positions of people whose opinion is presented in the article, to demonstrating the possibilities of using personal pronouns to express chain links in the text.

Productive types of written language include various types of business and personal letters, essays, SMS, etc. Here sample texts as an object for analysis also play an important role;

in order to write a particular kind of text, it helps if the writer has read that kind of text. (TURSUNOVNA, 2019). At the early stages they are used to identify typical lexical, grammatical and compositional features of the studied genre, as a reference text, as a template for students to make their own texts. Given such multifunctionality, sample texts should illustrate all the features of the studied genre as fully as possible. (KIKVIDZE, 2017).

Currently, paper correspondence is almost completely replaced by electronic one. Such genre as a note gives way to messages in messengers. One of the textbooks that is built taking into account these changes is “My first Russian lines” by E.V. Buzalskaya. In the first part samples of SMS messages are given. Although this type of writing is not included in the TORFL program, we believe that it is necessary to teach it during the writing classes. Here is very case when the letter quickly goes from the educational sphere into the real communication. Students chatting in WhatsApp groups communicating with each other and with teachers, this communication allows to demonstrate real skills. Exactly by the example of such correspondence we can show students that the written and oral forms of communication differ (YERBULATOVA; GILAZETDINOVA; BOZBAYEVA, 2019). that for successful written communication in a spoken language it is important not to translate from one's native language, but to look for equivalents in Russian. Using slang and jargon vocabulary seems to us inexpedient, our task is to teach how to use literary language means taking into account the specifics of the genre. Sample texts are very important here, because on their basis students learn how to build a short concise statement in compliance with lexical, grammatical, stylistic and ethical standards. The situations in which students may find themselves are very diverse, it is difficult to foresee all the variants, nevertheless, a certain set of texts on the most relevant topics should be formed.

Sample texts for teaching writing personal letters are well presented in textbooks on writing on A2 and B1 levels, there are B2 level textbooks that teach how to write an official business letter, recommendation letters, and the C1 level textbooks that teach essay writing. However, it must be noted that not all genres of texts are equally relevant for students, for example, being able to write a request for information is more important for them than a receipt or a power of attorney, writing a letter to a teacher on educational issues is more important than a letter of recommendation. Sample texts of official style should be characterized not only by conformity with a certain template, but also by the presence of the necessary linguistic and cultural information (AGEEVA, 2015). Students have the opportunity to create their own template of a written text on the basis of the sample texts.

Work on writing an essay to a greater extent takes into account lexical and grammatical content, structural and compositional construction of the text and the proper usage of stylistic devices. For example, “The expanse of an essay” by E.V. Buzalskaya focus student’s attention on the lexical units and stylistic devices such as metaphor, comparison, antithesis, irony, parceling, etc. The presence of the reference texts distinguishes favorably “Writing an essay” by D.V. Kolesova. Graduate and postgraduate students have an idea about the specifics of this genre, while we have to explain its structural and compositional features to the regular students, so a sample is needed. In general if a teacher offers a text specially created by himself as a model, in our opinion, this does not violate the requirements of authenticity, since he can use a wide range of language tools, as he creates a reference text that will be analyzed by the students in terms of its constituent elements, and it is the structural-schematic image that will remain with the students.

While teaching productive writing, in our opinion, it is possible to use “anti-sample” texts early enough. At the A2 and B1 level there are should not be grammatical and lexical errors, only compositional and logical ones. At the B2 and C1 levels it is possible to offer texts that also include lexical and grammatical defects, as the students have to develop a self-editing skills.

Summary

To date, a writing training system for passing state testing on Russian as a foreign language is well developed. In most cases it is oriented to studying youth. But there are a certain percentage people, who are not planning to take the exam (TORFL), who are not going to enter Russian universities and do not plan to have business contacts. There are practically no written textbooks designed for them.

In these circumstances the question of designing educational texts or the selection of the existing ones takes on particular importance. From this point of view the further perspectives of this research can be seen.

Conclusions

The writing course content should be differentiated depending on the audience purposes. Textbooks on writing development should be built in accordance with this criterion. However,

we observe that the generalized approach is used. This, in our opinion, is one of the current methodological problems in RSL teaching.

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