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Text-forming skills of students in the field of description as a genre form

Summary

The process of transferring knowledge is discursive: it is based on dialogicality in active speech acts (lessons, activities) and on partnership in the interaction of the sender (teacher) and recipient (student), and texts are an inseparable component of this process. Forming the linguistic awareness of the student remains extremely important in the educational discourse. The consequences of political, social and economic changes, including the IT revolution, translate very intensively on the communication system of young people - children, pupils, students - who can be safely called e-generation today. In the process of creating information, the writing-speaking opposition is disappearing, texts are created in a hurry- without proper preparation and concentration- and consequently, the rules and formal norms in the field of spelling, syntactic and stylistic correctness are often violated. With regard to the signaled consequences of changes taking place in the conemporary world, the opinion of many eminent linguists arises, emphasizing the importance of equipping people with the ability to create and receive messages. This skill is referred to as a textual competence, and in order to emphasize the very process of creation - it is called a text-forming competence.

The creation of texts of various genres is possible mainly due to constant contact with patterns, as well as thanks to the systematic acquisition of basic knowledge about the text, its structure, pragmatics, and complex and multidimensional textological operations. It is important for primary school pupils to have an interest in reading, and evoking such interest can be treated as the responsibility of teachers of all specialties. The main task of Polish language education remains teaching the art of creating successful texts of a specific genre form as a communicative discourse implementation. Knowledge of different language codes and different syntax rules specific to written and spoken texts is also essential in this process. Spoken language, when conveying communication intentions to the sender, also has prosodic means that may influence its structure and thematic-rhematic structure; albeit a higher degree of preparation is undoubtedly characterized by the written text.

Creating various forms of written expression requires students to have both theoretical knowledge and linguistic skills, which rational training still requires diagnostic research and constant methodological support for teachers. Shaping students' language skills is a craft process in with the necessity to use appropriate tools.

The genre forms frequently realized by students in primary school include: essays, characteristics, descriptions, stories with dialogue, dialogues and summaries. This dissertation is devoted to description as a genre form. Using the textological methodologies used in the analysis of the text and discourse, 608 texts prepared by students of primary schools and last year of lower secondary schools were examined in eight facilities in rural areas in the Dębica commune and in a metropolitan school in Warsaw. The research was conducted in 2018.

Descriptions of characters, descriptions of space and descriptions of internal experiences were analyzed. All aspects of the compositional pattern of a descriptive text were assessed (text titles, text frames, whole-part relations). Interpretation includes treating the text as a product - the effect of strategies used in the process of linguistic activity - and the students' text-forming skills. The aim of the research was to check the level of language competences of students from rural schools and city school students, and to determine which scopes are related to similarities and differences. Research operations have been linked to the learning process, or more precisely - to the primary role of the teacher in acquiring the competence to create texts by students.

This work includes seven chapters, four of which are devoted to theoretical and methodological considerations, while the following three parts present the details and results of the textological analyzes carried out.

The first chapter discusses educational discourse against the background of other types of discourse and the relationship between text and discourse, with particular emphasis on the varieties of educational discourse - a specific form of communication in an interactive system. The analysis of the complexity of the discourse world involves discussing the relationship between the language system and its implementation - discourse and text - as multiple research concepts bring different definitions of discourse and the evolution of the approach to text. Against the background of general concepts of discourse, the area of school communication existing in the process of education and school upbringing - also referred to as didactic communication - is distinguished in which an important role is played by: teacher's language, students' perception, scientific material, evaluation and evaluation. One can talk about the formation of an educational discourse - a specific form of communication in an interactive system.

The second chapter focuses on discussing the relationship between language and communicative competences in the educational process. Moreover, the role of textual competence and the place of textual competence in the linguistic activity of the student were considered. Language knowledge

should be subordinated to shaping communicative competence. Language understanding, including the rules of semantics, pragmatics and grammar, can be used in school language education to analyze the meaning of linguistic units in action and to create texts.

The third chapter refers to the genre as it is culturally and historically shaped and can be treated as a communication tool. The genre is therefore the realization of a specific type of discourse. Against the background of the genre, a description is defined as a statement that decides about an object-a person, a thing, a phenomenon-and also gives its properties and components, and defines their relations and references. The description strategy therefore comes down to enumerating, which seems to limit the possibilities of its schematization. The basic description strategies are: moving from general to detail, part-whole relationship, diagrammatic notation (iconicity), rules of thematisation (hypertheme). The general model of the structure of the description text indicates that the description of the object is performed most often by: giving the name of the described object, placing the object in the temporal-spatial background, calculating and valorising the properties of the object and its parts, listing its component parts, and determining the relationship between them.

The fourth chapter, which is also a transition between the theoretical introduction and the analysis of students' work, presents the methods of scientific research, in particular the method of document analysis - school texts prepared by students from the fourth grade of primary school to the third grade of lower secondary school. Moreover, the researched groups of students from urban and rural primary and middle schools were characterized and the course of the research was described.

The fifth chapter is devoted to the analysis of the applied initial formulas and the formulas ending the descriptive texts. Both proper delimitators-the signals of the beginning-and secondary delimitators - symptoms fulfilling this function due to their constant appearance at the beginning of the text-were observed. This is a significant part of the written statements interpretation, because each descriptive statement should contain delimitation signals of the beginning and end in order to meet the defining conditions of the text. At the beginning of the text, its metatextual announcement should appear, referring to the communicative situation and introducing the subject of the description. The phenomenon of titling descriptions was also subjected to a detailed examination, as the title is an important component of the text frame and a signal of the beginning from which the reader begins reading it.

The sixth chapter focuses on the compositional aspect of the description. The analysis of the works written by the students was aimed at finding an answer to the question: What elements were included

in the character description (e.g. age, height, clothes; initial general impressions - silhouette; close-up details of the face; head, hair; generalization, summary), description of the landscape (naming the elements of space and relations between them, using various adjectives to describe properties) and in the description of internal experiences (use of vocabulary for feelings, vocabulary describing internal and external manifestations of feelings, stylistic means). The diagnosis was made of the tripartite expression and the coherence of the text.

The seventh chapter refers to the recommendations of the core curriculum in the field of linguistic correctness of students in the implementation of the description, as well as comments on effective ways to develop and improve students' text-forming competences and examples of didactic practices in the field of shaping these skills. This chapter also includes postulates regarding the continuation of creative activities in Polish language education, aimed at developing emotional sensitivity and imagination, awakening linguistic awareness, teaching rules, and above all, facilitating the development of the habits of using them correctly in the process of composing good texts.

Summing up the results of the research, the primary attention was paid to the process of titling descriptive texts, assuming that the title names the text, and creates a metatextual frame of the statement. Research has shown that only fourth-graders- and very rarely fifth- and sixth-graders- make efforts to assign titles to the descriptions created; and the essays of students of the older grades - seventh, eighth and lower secondary school - have no titles. The noticeable tendency for students to omit titles to descriptive texts is a process that progresses with age - in the older grades, this skill is not used for any variety of description.

The observations show that when creating texts, students use strategies adapted to the particular type of description, e.g. the description of the character is dominated by the enumeration, in the presentation of space the most frequent technique is the spatial location of the elements, while the emotional involvement of the subject prevails in the descriptions of feelings.

A phenomenon worth emphasizing is the length and division of the essay into paragraphs, i.e. components that are logical units of a longer text, making it easier to understand the whole. Works by older students- starting from the fifth grade- in the vast majority of cases have a tripartite structure, enriched architecturally; they are divided into paragraphs, which proves that the pupils can divide the content internally in a coherent text. Fourth grade students create short, one-paragraph texts.

In the proper part of the character description, primary school respondents schematically include age, height, as well as initial general impressions, mainly approving the figure and dress of the subject.

Pupils of the gymnasium present the elements of the head: hair, details of the face in the smallest detail; then they move on to generalizations and an evaluative summary.

Self-descriptions constitute a small group of descriptive texts. The essays follow the convention of describing, extended by the elements of presenting "without limits". The exceptional openness of students indicates that they write "from themselves", and often it seems as if they were writing "for themselves", not being guided by the expectations of the recipients. Self-description texts are more elaborate and much more extensive than other character descriptions. These are auto / personality presentations with little attention to auto / appearance. Inside the self-reports, subjective emotions and critical remarks are reflected, and there is self-reflection before the end of the descriptive act. It seems that the students are trying to convey as much information about themselves as possible.

When assessing the text-forming skills of students in terms of describing space, it is noticed that about 70 percent of descriptions are similar- formed according to one pattern- by imitation. Most likely, this corresponds to the learning process within a typical school lesson: the teacher directs the student's thinking, and the student solves the task following the teacher's instructions. There are discernible problems considering the knowledge of concrete nouns with the most detailed meaning, for example in terms of names of crops or tree species. Problems in the lexical sphere concern both students from rural schools and students from the city school.

On the basis of the conducted analysis, it can be seen that although the attitude of students to creating a description of experiences is positive, the quality of the text proves poor creative skills in 40 percent of respondents. The problem concerns the cliché naming and definition of emotions and the feelings of the subject, and the occurrence of repetitions in naming feelings. Inside the description of experiences there is both vocabulary for feelings and emotions, as well as terms describing the internal and external manifestations of feelings and also evaluating lexemes. Students know superficial and model emotions, using mainly basic means to name and describe them - abstract nouns, verbs and adjectives (least frequently participles). It is quite common to name emotions by describing gestures and changes in the external appearance of the figure. The visible signals of experienced emotions include primarily some changes in facial expressions, mainly showing fear, anger and sadness. There are numerous names of changes in the body's motor skills and the impact of external stimuli on the body and mind: the effect of weakening, stiffening, dying, disrupting the work of internal organs, uncontrolled reactions and behavior. Student descriptions of experiences are determined by the situation in which the subject of the description found himself, and it is clearly visible that the description of the sphere of feelings is preceded by a description of the situation; it is

a time sequence of events, a cause and effect chain. One can get the impression that the students, by imitating reality, "describe and tell" with a clear presence of colloquiality in the texts.

At the final stage of the conducted considerations, the level of text-creating competences of students from rural schools and students from a metropolitan school was compared. It should be stated that there is no fundamental difference between the essays of these two groups of respondents. At the beginning of the research it seemed the differences would be marked, however after completing the analysis, it turned out that it was not justified to put forward categorical conclusions in this matter. One can talk about the current trends in implementing the description. The research, carried out simultaneously in a large city and in smaller centers, showed differences in the scope of the revealed creative schematism aimed in two directions: towards modifying the pattern and introducing colloquial Polish. The texts of students from rural schools are more neutral, more faithfully following the patterns proposed in the educational process, and showing a greater tendency to be patterned. On the other hand, the textual realizations of students from the urban area are more often a breach of conventionality, presenting a certain departure from the compositional pattern, an example of which are self-descriptions prepared by them. On the other hand, in the implementation of the description of experiences, one can speak of a slightly higher creativity revealed by students of rural schools, who more often tried to diversify the development of events in such a way as to make the described experiences unusual.

It is also worth to juxtapose the stylistic skills of students from rural areas and a large city. In the realizations of Warsaw students, there are expressions indicating a slightly higher lexical level, using a richer vocabulary. It can be assumed that the place of residence, in the sense of greater accessibility to cultural goods, has a beneficial effect on the language skills of children.

After analyzing the rich text material, an indisputable desideratum coming to mind in the process of improving text-creating skills considers working with literary texts. On the basis of properly selected readings, it is worth to expand the vocabulary, develop the emotional sensitivity and imagination of students, and awaken linguistic awareness. Teaching stylistic rules and developing the habits of using them correctly in the text-forming process is possible in correlation with reading. Reading is communing with patterns, then perhaps the time to change these patterns in the era of cultural and communication transformations has come. Perhaps children should be allowed to choose their reading more often according to their interests, which will prevent them from being indifferent. For this purpose, it is necessary to skillfully provoke a discussion with the text, to search for important and redundant information in the content. Before starting to read the book, reliable results are achieved

by making students interested in skilfully formulated key questions in the field of the subject, deep understanding of the text.

In the educational process, the school cannot stand next to revolutionary changes. First of all, changes in the model of educating teachers, especially Polish teachers, are necessary. Polish language teachers should show concern and skills in the field of supplementing and enriching the developed so far patterns and models with further searches, as well as studies synchronized with actual educational needs. Teachers are obliged to counteract the schematicism of didactic activities, because the school's transmitting-receiving pattern- along with the schematicism of didactic activities- imply the stereotyping of language, its specific stiffening and "discoloration", which is especially perpetuated in the preparation of written texts. It should be emphasized that a student's text-forming proficiency is shaped by an innovative and committed teacher, from whom "everything begins".

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