TEXT AND DISCOURSE AS SPECIALIZED SYSTEM OF PROFESSIONALLY ORIENTED COMMUNICATION

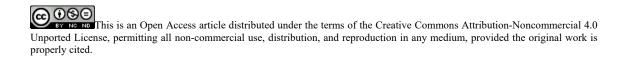Natalia Nikolayevna Gonchar (a)*
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Abstract

The article describes English professionally oriented instructional text and the English instructional discourse as a single specialized system of argumentative and professionally oriented communication. In this context, the learning process in a foreign-language instructional environment for training a specialized technician is an interaction between a teacher and students and their activity is carried out in the course of generating and interpreting texts. Therefore, the instructional communication in a foreign-language learning space proceeds in the form of textual activity. Setting it as a goal mainly to investigate and determine the features of the English instructional text, the author highlights its specific characteristics. In this respect, textual activity in the learning interaction is nothing more than a content-semantic exchange, where the English instructional text / discourse acts as a tool for transmitting communicatively significant information. Thus, the English instructional text and the English instructional discourse are interchangeable concepts and can be considered as a tool for using language as a single specialized system for expressing certain ways of thinking, designed to purposefully influence the student, introducing a certain system of knowledge into his consciousness, including scientific knowledge and ideas in order to change his knowledge / knowledge system and ideas about the real view of the world. The English instructional text and the English instructional discourse is a single specialized system of argumentative, professionally oriented communication functioning in a foreign language instructional space for training a specialized technician, the purpose of which is a harmonious socialization of a new member of society.

1. Introduction

The word 'text' is intuitively clear and understandable to any native speaker, but the essential characteristics of the text can be explained only when the following factors are taken into account, namely: communicative, sociocultural, and cognitive. These factors are correlated with the proper linguistic (verbal) text characteristics. This regulation underlies the currently existing distinction between the concepts of the 'text' and 'discourse'.

The term 'discourse' refers to a set of scientific interdisciplinary concepts that are widely used in modern science. But it means practically anything to please a researcher. In sociology, it is a socially induced way of communication between people and their understanding of social reality. In communication science, discourse is the context and verbal and non-verbal elements of communication, as well as the content of communication, which can be considered as a kind of general system of rules explaining the practices of verbal and non-verbal interaction in a given society and era for the knowledge production. Thus, discourse is a system of knowledge representation accepted and approved in society, which is organized in such a way as to produce thematically specific meanings and to share them. That is, discourse is a specific subject of discussion involved in a social situation.

For the purposes of the study, the discourse definition presented by Demyankov (2005) is the most important one:

> Discourse is an improvised piece of a text consisting of more than one sentence or an independent part of a sentence. Often, but not always, it centers around some pivotal concept, creates a general context describing the characters, objects, circumstances, times, actions, etc., being determined not so much by the sequence of sentences as by the world that is common for the discourse creator and its interpreter, which is 'built' as the discourse unfolds .... The underlying structure for discourse has the form of a sequence of elementary propositions interconnected by logical relations of conjunction, disjunction, etc. Elements of discourse are the narrated events, their participants, performative information and 'non-events', i.e.: a) circumstances accompanying the events; b) background explaining the events; c) assessment of the participants in the events; d) information that correlates discourse with events. (p. 28)

Stepanov (1995) notes that "discourse is described as any language that has its own texts", "as a way of operating (with) language" (pp. 655 - 688). Tsurikova (2001) focuses on the mutual nature of discourse, considering it "a method (form) of interpersonal verbal interaction" (p. 130). Ivanova (2005) understands by discourse "a continuous, extended segment of speech in its actual use" (p. 51). Samoilova (2005) gives discourse the following definition: "Discourse is a text created by a speaker (writer) to achieve a certain communicative goal, which is realized through appropriate strategies and tactics that dictate the choice of linguistic means with the necessary meaning" (p. 161).

In our opinion, the most significant discourse definition is proposed by Arutyunova (1982): "Discourse is a coherent text combined with extralinguistic, pragmatic, sociocultural, psychological and

other factors; the text taken in the event aspect; speech viewed as a purposeful social action... " (pp. 5 - 40).

We agree with the above definitions of other researchers and consider them as additions to the deduced own one. In our understanding, discourse is an actualized speech work which is dependent on linguistic and non-linguistic factors (the latter ones are not included in the research area of the study).

In some studies, there is a tendency to distinguish between discourse and text in the paradigmatic relation "static – dynamism", "process – result". Thus, researchers Brown and Yule (1983) point out that activity, procedural beginning is attributed to discourse, while the text appears as a product of speech production, which has a definite complete and fixed form.

As a criterion for differentiating the concepts under consideration, Yu. Prokhorov chooses the oppositional pair "extroversion – introversion". In the author's concept understanding, discourse is "an extraverted figure of communication", "a set of verbal forms of a certain linguocultural community representatives' practice organizing and content communication formalizing". 'Text', on the contrary, is "an introverted figure of communication", "a set of rules for the linguistic and extralinguistic content communication organization of a certain linguocultural community's representatives" (Prokhorov, 2006, p. 34).

Discourse and text are contrasted in a number of works in the binary opposition "virtuality – actuality". van Dijk (1977), for example, notes that "the text being an abstract theoretical construct is realized in discourse" (p. 261). The researcher prefers to talk about the analysis of discourse, which includes the text. In one of the fundamental research for discourse theory, Serio (1999) studying "a way of operating with language" defined discourse "as a purposeful use of language to express a special mentality, requiring the certain language features and specific grammar and vocabulary activation" (pp. 337-385). According to Leech (1983), 'text' is realized in a message through which 'discourse' is carried out: "discourse by means of message by means of text" (p. 59). Apparently, this opposition is explained by an attempt to link form with function.

In modern linguistics, two fundamental approaches to the discourse definition are clearly traced: formal and functional.

From the first approach standpoint, discourse is understood as "language above the sentence" (Stubbs, 1983, p. 272). Zvegintsev (1976) considers discourse as "two or more sentences in a semantic connection" (p. 170).

The second functional approach defines discourse as any language use and analyzes the discourse functions from the standpoint of the language functions studying in a broad sociocultural aspect. In linguistics, discourse is viewed in comparison with other linguistic phenomena. As a rule, discourse is opposed to the text and appeals to the dichotomy of "oral discourse – written text". Makarov (1998) emphasizes that such a distinction unjustifiably narrows the scope of these categories, reducing them to two forms of linguistic reality – using and not using writing. In general, this approach considers discourse and text as synonyms. But various cases of the text functioning in their verbal realization can be presented in a written (graphic) form, and discourse – in oral one.

There is a third approach to the discourse definition: "formal-functional", which was proposed by Deborah Shiffrin. Researcher Makarov (1998) puts forward the idea of "discourse as utterance" (p. 86).

Considering the problem, following Aksenova and Zhalagina (1991), 'text' ('discourse') should be determined as:

Both the product of a person's speech activity, which has a subject-sign character, and the main unit of communication that arises in the process of communication and reflects the historical, social, cognitive and mental processes of the society development. That is the reality as it is, in its entirety, and, finally, the text is a concrete communication fragment, the main unit of human life contributing to the development of communication, that is the development of human civilization. (p. 49)

As shown above, regarding the concepts of 'discourse' and 'text', we accept the point of view of those researchers who consider the possibility to use these terms synonymously and leave the emphasized "procedurality" behind the discourse. Thus, text / discourse is a speech work, which has an argumentative focus, considered as a purposeful social speech action, as a component involved in the interaction of people and in the mechanisms of cognition.

2. Problem Statement

Turning to the consideration of the text realization in the English classroom in the instructional interaction under the conditions of a learning situation, the English instructional texts are a single specialized system of argumentative communication.

It should be noted that in a foreign language instructional space for training a specialized technician, the original (authentic, natural, genuine) text in English serves as a source of professional and scientific information and conveys knowledge about the global picture of the world. This text type is placed within the framework of tasks dictated by the integral learning situation, the non-identical situation of its primary existence, and in this context it becomes the English instructional text, which is the actualization of the English instructional discourse in the context of educational and pedagogical communication.

In the instructional interaction under the conditions of a learning situation, the English instructional text performs the following functions:

- a sample piece / standard of professional oral and written speech;
- a source of general cultural information;
- a source of socio-cultural information;
- a source of professional information;
- a source of linguistic information.

3. Research Questions

The analysis of empirical material, situations of specialized technicians' professional activity allows us to distinguish the following types of texts which function as sample texts in a learning situation and serve as a source of professional information:

- in practice – operating instruction, technical documentation, patent, advertising, contract, report;
- in research activities – abstract, review, description of the experiment, scientific article, abstract, thesis;
- in project work – plan, project, project evaluation.

In reality, these texts are units of learning in terms of the English instructional interaction in a learning situation, since a university leaver will meet such types of texts in his future professional work.

In this regard, the English instructional text as a unit of learning (which functions in the conditions of instructional interaction) can be characterized as complex, scientific, prepared, normative and extended, representing the unity of external and internal structures. The criterion for a teacher's instructional text selection is a future specialized technician's professional needs. This text type should contribute to the successful perception of the transmitted information in English through the logic and form of thought expression.

Being a fragment of communication – a phenomenon woven into the process of instructional communication, the English instructional text – a unit of language that functions in the process of communication, has, on the one hand, the common properties of all texts, and on the other hand – specificity due to the conditions of its functioning. These problems are considered in this study.

4. Purpose of the Study

Within the numerous tasks of high school, the most important one (along with the training of highly qualified technician specialists) is to increase the general cultural level of a university graduate. The level of general education of a person is one of the quality indicators of education in general. Of course, a person having higher education must be a qualified specialist in his professional activities and, at the same time, an educated person.

The student's instructional course in English, like no other learning item, has tremendous opportunities for the formation of a highly cultured personality. And it should be noted that this is mainly done through the textual training material. In this connection, it is necessary to determine text types functioning in a foreign language instructional space for training a specialized technician, to describe their functions in a learning process, to give their characteristics, and to consider this text functioning problems as a discourse formation.

So, the function of the text as a source of general cultural information, as a material for the personality development in the conditions of instructional interaction can be considered as its independent one. The personal interest of a student can be taken into account here to a lesser extent when choosing professionally oriented texts, since the totality of cultural values, moral norms, the intellectual development level of a person are completely objective concepts, and they must be formed in every person. For this purpose, instructional texts of general cultural orientation are selected. They carry information about the culture of the target language country in comparison with the culture of the native one, expand the students' cultural horizons, form moral principles, and develop thinking. These texts should contain problematic sense. It is necessary that such texts encourage students to express their opinions, arouse a desire to debate, argue, and stimulate the need for self-development. In our opinion,

such texts can be used as a stimulus for speaking, as material for the development of monologue and dialogical speech. At the same time, the information contained in these texts must correspond to the age, students' social experience and educational level. Such texts should take in informative material sufficient for organizing retelling, conversation, discussion and should be built on a familiar linguistic material.

Texts that are a source of socio-cultural information occupy a special place. These texts carry both regional and linguistic information. On the one hand, they contain information about the geography, history, traditions and customs, moral and social values of the target language country. On the other hand, they include information about the features of verbal and non-verbal behavior adopted in different situations of communication, while the linguistic phenomena functioning are demonstrated against the background of a social context. The task of such texts is to expand the students' socio-cultural horizons, to show the features and specifics of another culture, people, and social groups.

The text aimed at teaching intercultural communication should be modern and authentic, coherent speech typical sample on the topic, correspond to the oral communication linguistic norm, and reflect the national, communicative specifics.

The next function of the text, which can be considered as an independent one, is to be the source of linguistic information. In this case, the text is considered not as a sample demonstrating the features of speech behavior, but as a means of forming knowledge of lexical units for all spheres of speech activity, representing a context illustrating the use of vocabulary, as well as grammatical phenomena. Accordingly, sample texts of this kind should provide a context that makes it possible to understand the linguistic material accurately and unambiguously.

In our opinion, an important function is the English instructional text realization, which is implemented as a sample text in a learning situation for the writing skills development. Written speech is one of the aspects of professional activity training of technician specialists. Therefore, work on the development of writing skills should take place throughout the entire period of study at the university and must be focused on the real needs of the graduate in his future professional activity.

Analysis of the fields of activity of technical universities graduates allows us to consider the following texts types as a unit of learning in the context of instructional interaction:

1. Professional area: instruction, guidance, explanatory note, plan, project, summary, abstract, review, report theses, report, scientific article.

2. Business sphere: faxes, e-mails, orders, memoranda, forms, questionnaires, business letters, registration forms.

3. Everyday sphere: notes, postcards, personal letters.

5. Research Methods

The material for this study was a corpus of fragments of the English instructional texts in the amount of 150 units of analysis with a total volume of about 35,000 characters. The empirical material of this study was obtained while working with various modern instructional and methodological literatures. The versatility and variability of the tasks set in the study determined the use of the corresponding methods, the main of which are the theoretical-deductive method, discourse analysis, and conversion analysis. Depending on the specific stage of the analysis, the methods of semantic and pragmatic

interpretation, analysis, synthesis, comparison of communicative roles, elements of quantitative analysis were used.

6. Findings

The English instructional text is a source of professional information and the presentation of its frame model has the related problems of decoding and interpretation by the side of a student. Setting it as a goal mainly to investigate and determine the features of the English instructional text (EIT) it is necessary to highlight its specific characteristics:

1. The EIT, which is implemented in a foreign language instructional space for training a specialized technician, is a special type of a text, the purpose of which is to transfer, store and accumulate scientific knowledge and act as a result of the English instructional discourse activities.

2. The specificity of the EIT is associated with its information enrichment, which we understand as saturation with the results of cognitive experience. This determines the close relationship of all the EIT categories, such as information content, integrity, connectivity, articulation. Thus, the EIT specificity is manifested in special means of updating these categories and in their relation to each other.

3. The key to a successful EIT decoding should be its strict organization in accordance with certain requirements. The knowledge presented in this type of text should be clearly structured. Thus, the inclusion of a network of key terms / key concepts and methods of organized explication of the terminological / conceptual apparatus of the corresponding science are especially significant specific features of the EIT organization in this sense.

4. A specific feature of the EIT is the implementation of key terms / key concepts definitions in its different types. Expanding the content of these terms, the definitions types correlate with various knowledge formats (concepts, propositions, frames, etc.) and appear in the EIT as certain cognitive units determined by their own conceptual structure.

5. The analysis of the empirical material also made it possible to conclude that the EIT specificity is also manifested in a special set of lexical units used in it: both terminological and non-terminological. Consideration of the relationship between terminological and non-terminological vocabulary reveals the different roles of these units in the EIT. If the terms serve as 'foci' for the scientific knowledge introduction (semantically they structure the text), then the non-terminological vocabulary acts as a special 'background' facilitating the introduction of terms into the text – the names of concepts used in the descriptive parts of the EIT.

6. The specificity of the EIT is seen in the fact that it uses a large number of key scientific concepts that are closely related to each other, which is reflected in the lexical design of their definitions and is especially clearly manifested at the conceptual level, since a large number of concepts stand out in the content of terms. It is the conceptual analysis of the definitions of key scientific terms and concepts that makes it possible to see the depth of representation in the EIT domain of science and / or its systemic and structural organization.

7. The specificity of the EIT is also manifested in the fact that the terms along with scientific knowledge in this text type can convey elements of everyday knowledge, while "terminologizing" non-terminological vocabulary can convey scientific information in relation to a certain domain of science.

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This is possible because the different meanings of words used as terms are interconnected within such a nominative unit, and the individual meanings of terms and non-terms are interconnected throughout the entire text length.

8. The specificity of the EIT also lies in the fact that it verbalizes knowledge both about the basic concepts / concepts of science and about the existing hierarchy in the domain of science and the subcategorization of these concepts, about their relationship and interpenetration within the domain of science, as well as about their functioning at the level of everyday knowledge, and, thus, about their place in the view of the world as a whole. This type of the text also verbalizes knowledge about the methodology of science as a special sphere of human activity in general, about the methodology of scientific theory and its relationship with other areas of science (for example, linguistic). In this case, special information can be presented in the space of the text explicitly or can be implied by the author of the text.

9. Decoding of the EIT and its subsequent interpretation are associated not only with reading the explicitly presented information, but also with the restoration of implicit information that is revealed during the implementation of the inference mechanism. Obviously, the action of the inference mechanism is possible only if the teacher has a certain base of pre-knowledge / pre-understanding, since the main condition for the EIT understanding is the presence of knowledge in any particular field of science. Foreknowledge cannot be limited only to linguistic competence and general (or background) knowledge, but in the first place should include precisely expert knowledge.

10. Decoding of the EIT is carried out at several levels: at the lexical and grammatical level; at the level of cognitive structures of the scientific knowledge presentation in the text, when various types of relations are established between the basic concepts of science, and various frame structures and interframe connections are built; at the level of the conceptual structure, when the basic concepts, their totality as well as their functioning at various levels of the world categorization are determined and used by a particular science.

Taking into account the variability of the texts realizing in instructional process, it should be recognized that any type of a text (with the dominant role of the text that carries scientific and professional information), immersed in the instructional situation, can be considered the English instructional text. It follows from the above that the EIT as a discourse formation is a text realized in the conditions of instructional interaction and in a foreign-language instructional environment for training a specialized technician has many functions for a future technician specialist's harmonious personality development.

Thus, turning to the consideration of the text functioning problems as a discourse formation, we understand that the English instructional discourse is a normatively organized speech interaction between the teacher and the student based on the English instructional texts implementation in a learning situation. It has both linguistic and extralinguistic plans, using a certain system of professionally-oriented signs, taking into account the status-role characteristics of the main participants in communication – a teacher and a student (students), interacting in a learning situation interpreted within the framework of our concept as an institutionalized, communication-oriented, culturally marked communication system. In this respect, we believe that instructional discourse is a type of institutional communication with a regulatory

orientation, the purpose of which is the socialization of a new member of society and the transference of certain knowledge, skills, and social values to him.

In this context, the following system-forming signs are objectively inherent in the English instructional discourse: status-qualified participants, a localized chronotope, a goal conventionally organized within a given social institution, ritually fixed values, intentionally fixed strategies (sequences of speech actions in typical situations), a limited nomenclature of genres, and a clearly defined precedent phenomena arsenal (names, statements, functioning texts and realizing situations in learning interaction).

The English instructional discourse reflects the students' activities in the process of mastering and further use of the language. Here is the recreation of that communicative situation, which is as close as possible to the conditions of reality. The type of discourse under consideration is a complex model of the communicative activity organization, which includes both interactants' actualized speech manifestations and the participants' potential speech activity of the argumentative orientation in the dialogical interaction. Since the English instructional discourse has an argumentative essence and is aimed at a really present student in order to change his system of knowledge about the language, the surrounding reality, including his professional knowledge, the concept of "feedback" is inherent in it. It is the presence of feedback that endows the English instructional discourse with a sign of dialogicity, reducing it essentially to dialogue as a dynamic, developing speech phenomenon, which is based on argumentation. From this point of view, the terms "dialogue" and "dialogic interaction of an argumentative orientation" are applicable to the English instructional discourse. The dialogic basis of the English instructional discourse is explicated in the corresponding exchange of replica moves at the level of various discursive practices, which act as the minimum units of instructional interaction.

In the process of dialogical interaction, interactants carry out a content-semantic exchange, which is the essence of the argumentation process of the English instructional discourse. The discursive moves exchange by producing and interpreting statements of an argumentative orientation takes place in a special type of instructional interaction based on the English instructional text (original, authentic, natural, genuine and professionally-oriented one), placed within the framework of the instructional task situation dictated by the integral learning situation. Thus, the English instructional text is a type of institutional communication, a specially organized illocutionary speech action of argumentative orientation (containing explanatory bases for accurate understanding and interpretation). The main functions of the English instructional text are information and persuasion. They are goal-setting in the process of constructing argumentation. Argumentation in the English instructional text is characterized by the fact that it does not represent a pronounced discussion or dispute. The author of the text anticipates a possible discussion with students, foresees possible questions from their side, and gives them answers.

7.   Conclusion

Summarizing the above, it should be concluded that the basis of the argumentation of the English instructional text as part of the English instructional discourse is its linguistic and discursive characteristics. Thus, the characteristics of the English instructional text / the English instructional discourse are:

- institutionality,

- addressing,

- specific operating conditions,

- informativeness,

- consistency and organization of argumentation structure,

- linguistic characteristics,

- discursive characteristics

The research presented in this article suggests that the English instructional text and the English instructional discourse are interchangeable concepts and can be considered as a tool for using language as a single, specialized system for expressing certain ways of thinking, designed to purposefully influence the student, introducing a certain system of knowledge into his consciousness, including scientific knowledge and ideas, in order to change his knowledge / knowledge system and ideas about the real view of the world.

Thus, we dare to conclude that the English instructional text and the English instructional discourse is a single specialized system of argumentative, professionally oriented communication, functioning in a foreign language instructional space for training a specialized technician, the purpose of which is a harmonious socialization of a new member of society – a future specialist in a technical field.

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