УДК 372.881.111

N. N. Nikolaeva, A. A. Semenova (Moscow, Russia)
Bauman Moscow State Technical University

Training technical university postgraduates how to use intertextual strategies in their written academic texts in English

Представлены результаты экспериментального исследования, посвященного проблеме обучения магистров технического вуза академическому письму на английском языке, в частности вопросам корректного заимствования. Проведен анализ знаний и мнений студентов о приемлемости/неприемлемости плагиата, а также оценен уровень сформированности навыков допустимого заимствования. Разработан и апробирован курс по обучению магистров МГТУ им. Н. Э. Баумана навыкам применения интертекстуальной стратегий в письменных англоязычных специализированных текстах. Итоговые тестовые результаты показали, что 86% магистров выполнили письменное задание без неприемлемого прямого плагиата.

Ключевые слова: английский язык для специальных целей, методика преподавания иностранных языков, интердискурсивность, плагиат, интертекстуальная компетентность

The article presents the results of an empirical study aiming at drilling technical university ESP postgraduates in writing academic texts in English according to the discursive conventions and genre peculiarities. We analyze the postgraduates' acknowledgment of manifest intertextuality in the specialized discourses in order to reveal whether they perceive integral and non-integral references to the source as an obligatory device in ESP writing. A pilot course on teaching BMSTU postgraduates how to apply intertextual strategies and avoid plagiarism was developed and tried out. The final text results showed 86 % of positive performances.

Keywords: English for specific purposes (ESP), foreign language teaching methodology, interdiscursivity, plagiarism, intertextual competence

Introduction. Writing appropriate academic and specialized texts in English is a great intellectual challenge for second-language (L2) learners in Russian tertiary education settings, even for those who have a good command of general and professional English. The most intriguing issue is how to deal with intertextuality as a sophisticated linguistic tool involving awareness of interdiscursivity and plagiarism. The letter is a topic of considerable concern across both L2 students and English language teachers because of its serious socio-cultural and ethical repercussions as well as the complexity of its understanding and avoidance.

We consider intertextuality as a wide range of textual interactions between a given text and some earlier texts which have influenced it. Since "texts are not produced in a discoursal vacuum but are socially constructed" [10, p. 230], it is obvious that intertextuality is unavoidable and plays an important role in academic technical writing. It evokes a representation of the discourse situation and specific genre, as well as the textual resources that bear on them. The existence of many scientific pa-

pers and study books analyzing regular patterns in lexico-grammatical and rhetorical structures, stylistic devices, and other compositional features is evidence of interdiscursivity at work [3]; [6]; [8]; [15]; [16]. As academic and specialized genres are highly conventional, the interdiscursive interactions are significant enough to be considered in ESP teaching. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the current state of knowledge on intertextuality, interdiscursivity, and plagiarism with particular reference to their manifestations in specialist discourses in order to outline the implications for ESP teachers and learners.

Russian students as novice L2 academic writers in specialist discourses experience difficulty in dealing with intertextual and interdiscursive technical features. This is due to the cultural, cognitive and conventional differences in perceiving and processing academic information in both Russian and English. The demand of using unfamiliar language skills is also hard for them to meet because the language of studying is a foreign language; academic register is new to them as well. This situation creates serious challenges for L2 writers as the inappropriate intertextuality can be diagnosed as plagiarism and the consequences can be serious. Students, therefore, need to be taught how to avoid plagiarism and deal with other textual borrowing practices, such as paraphrasing, citation, copying or patchwriting [1]; [9], as Campbell puts it "even the most original academic paper integrates facts, ideas, concepts, and theories from other sources" [3, p. 211]. In this situation students need guidance based on recognizing the borders between legitimate and illegitimate types of intertextuality.

In particular, the current study is designed to explore the understanding and usage of acceptable paraphrasing and citation in English academic and specialist texts. The survey is carried out in the groups of first-year postgraduate students at Bauman Moscow State Technical University (BMSTU). All participants were involved in (a) expressing perceptions of definitions of acceptable paraphrasing, (b) explaining the participants' perceptions of paraphrased texts, and (c) giving recommendations for mastering acceptable paraphrasing and citation skills. We ask students to present both background information on their knowledge of paraphrasing and their confidence in paraphrasing skills.

Materials and methods. *Participants and Assignments.* Fifty-two first-year postgraduate students from engineering departments of BMSTU participated in the study. The student survey and one-year course were designed and piloted in 2020-2021 academic year. The course included assignments on examining the specialist texts and analyzing the signs of intertextuality, interdiscursivity, and plagiarism. It also trained how to identify and avoid plagiarism in their written texts, for example by applying citation, direct quoting, paraphrasing, text restructuring, using reporting phrases, synonyms and antonyms, changing parts of speech, word order, (im)personal constructions, summarizing [16].

The survey involved performing four assignments. In the first assignment, students were asked to read six definitions of paraphrasing taken from [12]. Then, they

should give their opinions on whether they consider each definition to be acceptable or unacceptable. The second assignment consisted of three original texts (some sections of journal papers) taken from academic specialist journals, each of which was followed by a paraphrase. Participants rated the paraphrases as acceptable, somewhat acceptable, or unacceptable, then explained the unacceptable or somewhat acceptable options. The students' results on the first and second assignments were used to calculate paraphrase knowledge scores. In the third assignment, the participants had to demonstrate their paraphrasing skills and express their ideas on the ongoing course of appropriate textual borrowing practices (including paraphrasing and academic citation conventions), and/or give recommendations on developing / improving university students' skills. The forth survey assignment checked what the participants learned and how confident they felt with regard to their paraphrasing skills.

Data analysis. Survey data were summarized using descriptive statistics and responses to open-ended questions [5]. We calculated paraphrase knowledge scores for each student using the data from the first and second assignments. The evaluation criteria for the first assignment were as follows: each correctly answered definition got 1 point, 2 points were given for uncertain responses, and 3 points – for incorrect answers. Participants received the following points for performing the second assignment: 1 point for each correct rating, 2 points for responses of somewhat acceptable, and 3 points were given for incorrectly rated item. Scores had the potential to range from 9 points (the best one) to 27 points (the worst one). The last assignments were evaluated by the teacher during free discussion at the lessons and individual interviews with the participants.

Results and discussion. *Responses to Paraphrasing Definitions*. Participant responses to one correct and five incorrect definitions of paraphrasing [12] are as follows: correct responses to all six definitions were provided only by 28% of the student participants.76% of students correctly identified definition (a) as unacceptable and 98% of them responded that definition (d) was acceptable. 66% of participants correctly identified definitions (e) and (f) as unacceptable. In contrast, 14% felt that stringing together short phrases from several sources in definition (e) was acceptable, and 20% thought that copying and reordering sentences in definition (f) was acceptable, pointing out that the references were both in the text and in the reference list. The patchwriting example in definition (c) was correctly rated by 81% as unacceptable, while 19% of the students incorrectly rated the definition as acceptable. As we see, the students responded accurately to the definitions that represented superficial paraphrasing and exact copying.

Responses to Example Paraphrases. In our study, the first paraphrase represents patchwriting, the second one is an acceptable paraphrase, and the third paraphrase is an acceptable paraphrase with missing source information. Patchwriting was correctly rated by 37% of the participants as unacceptable and incorrectly assessed by 25% as acceptable and by 38% as somewhat acceptable. The students recognized that the style

was too similar to the original quote. They also perceived that some of the key details and source information were missing or inaccurate. Although 85% of students correctly identified the second paraphrase as acceptable, it was incorrectly rated by 10% as somewhat acceptable and by 5% as unacceptable. Of those who incorrectly assessed it as somewhat acceptable or unacceptable, 46% consider that some of the key details were missing or inaccurate, while 24% indicated that the style was too similar to the original passage, 27% perceived that the length of the paraphrase was problematic, and 3% responded that the source information was missing. Forty-four percent of the students correctly rated the third paraphrase as somewhat acceptable. It was incorrectly assessed by 62% as unacceptable and by 18% as acceptable. The explanation of unacceptable paraphrasing was the following: the source information was missing, the key details were missing or inaccurate, and the paraphrase was too long or short.

Participants' Recommendations for Developing Paraphrasing Skills. We proposed two options of learning paraphrasing skills and asked the students to give their suggestions. The first option was based on an online course with paraphrasing exercises [7]. The second option included the university classes under the teachers' supervision. We designed and developed a special pilot course with assignments on examining the specialist texts and analyzing the signs of intertextuality, interdiscursivity, and plagiarism. It also trained how to identify and avoid plagiarism in their written texts, for example by applying citation, direct quoting, paraphrasing, text restructuring, using reporting phrases, synonyms and antonyms, changing parts of speech, word order, (im)personal constructions, summarizing. The students gave positive comments on the online course with examples of acceptable paraphrases and practice exercises. As one student put it, "it is efficient because it is available for students whenever needed, in particular, if a student shows poor paraphrasing skills in our university course." The other student indicated that a website with a visible link to an explanatory page with examples would be more helpful; however, she emphasized the need for better instructional resources from the "real teacher." Many students agreed that teachers should explain paraphrasing expectations to their classes as well as there were some suggestions that teachers should provide paraphrasing instruction in the class. Practically all participants agreed that teaching how to avoid plagiarism must be taught in all first-and second-year postgraduate classes involving academic writing in English. Some students believe that explicit instruction will lead to better paraphrasing skills.

Overall, the findings from this study indicated varying degrees in the students' understanding of acceptable and unacceptable paraphrases. On the whole, the survey results reveal that only 37% of our postgraduate students regard the reference to the source as a necessity, but only 10 % can do them properly while performing their own written assignments. The same result was demonstrated when 37% of students correctly recognized patchwriting as not acceptable. The majority of participants expressed the need for explicit paraphrasing instruction and responded favorably to suggestions

of an online course with exercises for developing students' paraphrasing skills and our designed seminars on avoiding plagiarism under the teachers' supervision.

The Authors' Recommendations. After conducting the study and analyzing the literature on avoiding plagiarism, we highlight three key recommendations for developing students' acceptable paraphrasing skills. The first recommendation concerns establishing a positive classroom climate with a focus on academic integrity [4]; [6] and giving students opportunities to discuss and evaluate the ethics of textual borrowing [11]; [13]. Second, teachers should clearly explain their paraphrasing expectations and provide students with resources (e.g., specially designed assignments, websites, handouts, etc.) to support them [6]; [14]. Explicit paraphrasing instruction is another key recommendation [1]; [8]. We consider that deliberately designed course with explicit instructions, specialized seminars, and teachers' supervision is the most efficient way to master and enhance the paraphrasing skills of university students.

Conclusion. In conclusion, intertextuality presents a diverse set of challenges for both ESP students and teachers. The study reveals that the specificity of cultural, academic, linguistic, and scientific background can also influence the students' intertextual competence. Avoiding plagiarism also requires the ability to incorporate appropriate intertextual relationships in writing. This means that the needs of the ESP student are twofold. To the extent that students may lack an awareness of the plagiarism seriousness, they need to be supplied with the declarative knowledge about which writing practices can be considered unacceptable in the academic and specialist contexts. The students' resulting paraphrasing knowledge scores of 86 % demonstrated in this study are a reflection of their own written practices under the correct teacher's supervision, although patchwriting could be found in their written work and may be perceived as acceptable paraphrasing by the students. Only 28% of the firs-year postgraduate students reported that they were very confident in their ability to paraphrase appropriately. The most popular recommendation for improving the students' paraphrasing and citation skills was the specially designed course with exercises such as those held in the current study. More extensive research into (un)acceptable textual practices is needed to perceive the knowledge and expectations of both students and English language teachers.

References

1. Abasi A. R., Akbari N. Are we encouraging patchwriting? Reconsidering the role of the pedagogical context in ESL student writers' transgressive intertextuality // English for Specific Purposes. 2008. Vol. 27. Is. 3. P. 267–284.

2. Bailey S. Academic writing for international students of business and economics. London: eBook Published, 2020. 346 p.

3. Campbell C. Writing with others' words: Using background reading text in academic compositions // Kroll B. (ed.). Second language writing. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990. P. 211–230.

4. Chintia B. A. EFL teachers' and students' plagiarism management strategies in English writing. Menulis, 2020. 60 p.

5. Creswell J. W., Guetterman T. C. Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research. Boston, MA: Pearson Education, 2018. 245 p.

6. Eerkes D. Academic integrity handbook for instructors and teaching assistants. Edmonton: AB, University of Alberta, 2012. 24 p.

7. Johnson C. Intertextuality: A Reference Guide on Using Texts to Produce Texts [Electronic resource]. URL: https://openenglishatslcc.pressbooks.com/chapter/intertextuality-a-reference-guide-on-using-texts-to-produce-texts/

8. Keck C. The use of paraphrase in summary writing: A comparison of L1 and L2 writers // Journal of Second Language Writing. 2006. Vol. 15. Is. 4. P. 261–278.

9. Pecorari D., Shaw P. Types of student intertextuality and faculty attitudes // Journal of Second Language Writing. 2012. Vol. 21. Is. 2. P. 149–164.

10. Pecorari D. Intertextuality and plagiarism / Hyland K., Shaw P. (eds.). The Routledge handbook of English for academic purposes. New York: Routledge Publ., 2016. P. 230–243.

11. Perry B. Exploring academic misconduct: Some insights into student behavior // Active Learning in Higher Education. 2010. Vol. 11. Is. 97. P. 97–108.

12. Powell D., Teare E. Writing for law. New York: MacMillan, 2010. 216 p.

13. Shi L. Rewriting and paraphrasing source texts in second language writing // Journal of Second Language Writing. 2012. Vol. 21. Is. 2. P. 134–148.

14. Silfiani S. Plagiarism in English academic writing: Students' perceptions // English Education Journal. 2018. Vol. 1. P. 102–123.

15. Thompson C. H. Plagiarism, Intertextuality and Emergent Authorship in University Students' Academic Writing // PORTAL. 2009. Vol. 6. Is. 1. P. 171–193.

16. Wallwork A. English for Academic Research: Writing Exercises. New York: Springer Science+Business Media, 2013. 190 p.

L. I. Ovchinnikova (Ufa, Russia)
Ufa Law Institute of Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia

Teaching method of listening to foreign language for cadets of non-linguistic university

В статье рассматриваются особенности методики обучения аудированию на занятиях по иностранному языку для курсантов неязыкового вуза.

***Ключевые слова*:** методика преподавания, аудирование, иностранные языки, курсант