

“Russian and English Examination Text: Defining Characteristics, Parameters, and Functions”

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“Russian and English Examination Text: Defining Characteristics, Parameters, and Functions” is a contrastive and comparative linguistics research aimed at identifying quantitative and qualitative parameters of Reading texts used in three tests: Test of Russian as a Foreign Language, the Second Certificate Level (TORFL-2), Unified State Exam in English (USE) and Cambridge English: First (FCE).

TORFL-2, USE, FCE are objective, direct and complex tests with a grading scale of B2 (CEFR) proficiency level. Reading texts of the above mentioned exams have a three part structure: 1) *the main part* which consists of the reading text, 2) *the secondary part* which consists of two texts: the instruction and multiple choice questions with one correct answer and 3(2) destructors, and 3) the keys is the text with correct answers.

The research data includes the following: 12 texts of Test of Russian as a Foreign Language(2nd Certificate Level), 6247 words, 6 texts of Unified State Exam in English, 5424 words; 6 texts of Cambridge English: First, 6048 words.

The research findings are significant for test developers and can be used in University courses of Text studies, Contrastive and Comparative Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, Language Assessment.

The research was conducted :according to the plan and implied fulfillment of the following tasks:

1. Describe paradigms of text complexity/readability studies in Russian Linguistics;
2. Identify defining characteristics of the examination discourse;
3. Identify defining characteristics of an examination text as a secondary text;
4. Develop the algorithm of the examination text analysis;
5. Describe common and specific characteristics of TORFL-2, USE, FCE as examination texts.

Complexity of every text under study was estimated using Coh-Metrix and T.E.R.A. programs. The author pursued the research applying componential

analysis, contextual analysis, distributive analysis, statistical analysis and comparative method.

The findings of the research are as follows :

1. The defining characteristics of an examination text as a secondary text include 1) the degree of concreteness/abstractness, 2) the number of common and rare words, 3) the number of words nominating culture-specific conceptual referents, 4) syntactic simplicity, 5) referential cohesion, 6) deep cohesion, 7) semantic coherence of the main and the secondary texts.
2. TORFL-2 examination texts contain a large number of words nominating culture-specific conceptual referents that makes different from USE and FCE.
3. Degrees of readability of the studied Russian and English texts estimated by Flesch-Kincaid formula define them as heterogeneous.
4. The referential cohesion in Russian texts is primarily formed with equal values of reference and substitution while the referential cohesion in English texts is predominantly formed by reference.
5. The correlation of the main and secondary texts is based primarily on explicit content and factual information. Lexical and grammatical synonyms, hyponyms and hyperonyms manifest the semantic links between the main and secondary texts.
6. FCE texts can be defined as homogeneous due to the similarity of all text parameters.
7. TORFL-2, USE, FCE texts have three homogeneous parameters: 1) word concreteness/abstractness, 2) number of common and rare words, 3) deep cohesion.

The quantitative and qualitative parameters of an examination text analysis may be applied for the other genres text complexity evaluation. The obtained results can be used at university courses of language teaching (Russian and English) as a second language, of general linguistics and contrastive-comparative linguistics, lexicology, applied linguistics as well as while preparing different scientific research.

The main concepts of the dissertation were presented at three International and six Russian-wide conferences, in 16 articles including 3 VAK and 3 Scopus articles.

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