

*Yeremenko Tetyana
Lukyanchenko Iryna*

MEDIA TRANSFER METAPROCEDURE IN TEACHING ENGLISH WITH TEXT

*Ushynsky University,
Odesa, Ukraine*

Abstract. *Work with text at tertiary level is considered to be one of the most important activities for students', prospective foreign language teachers', professional education. The article outlines the possibilities of using media transfer metaprocedure in teaching English with text. Media transfer metaprocedure is aimed at transferring text information to another cognitive context or to another form of its presentation. The focus is on developing students' skills of re-encoding information from one form to another. The experience of media transfer metaprocedure implementation is described.*

Keywords: *teaching English with text, media transfer metaprocedure, text information, re-encoding information.*

Over the years there has been continuing interest to the search of effective techniques of work with foreign language text. A number of studies are devoted to teaching text analysis and interpretation as a means of its understanding (Kukharensko (1979), Mellor & Patterson (2001), Shelestiuk (2001), Kirejtshuk & Vasilyeva (2003), Gorshkova & Kolegaeva (2005), Shirova (2006), Miroshnichenko (2013), etc.). Recent researches (Burke (2000), Solovova (2002), Galskova & Gez (2006), Tarnopolsky (2006), Wallace (2006), Buckley (2011), Dobromyslova (2015), etc.) describe several methods and techniques of teaching reading texts of different styles and genres.

Our review of the literature in the field showed that transformations as one of the tools of development learners' skills of work with text information, on the one hand, and developing language proficiency, on the other, has been given little attention to. In our previous researches "Text in teaching English as a major in Higher School: communicative-cognitive approach" [6] and "Metaprocedures of processing text information in teaching English as a major in Higher School: communicative-cognitive approach" [5] we discussed the use of seven metaprocedures of work with text, media transfer among them. In this article we focus on the detailed description of the media transfer implementation in the process of pre-service English teacher education.

The **objective** of this article is to clarify and substantiate the use of media transfer metaprocedure in teaching English majors with text in Higher School.

The media transfer metaprocedure is aimed at processing the information contained in the given text, at its transferring to another cognitive context or to

another form of its presentation. It therefore signifies the rendering of a given text in different format/style with specific wording. The changes to be made should relate to the wording/format/style only with the sense remaining unchanged. Thus, the focus is on developing students' skills of re-encoding information from one form to another and using adequate language means.

Text transfer call upon a wide range of skills: cognitive, language, integrative linguistic and communicative. It gives students a chance to practice the lexical, grammatical, syntactic, stylistic and pragmatic knowledge. At the same time students not only have to apply their knowledge of vocabulary and grammar and to use their store of prior linguistic knowledge, they are encouraged to perform such cognitive operations as analysis, synthesis, comparison, generalization, etc., which lead to cognitive development, and to work out the strategies of text work (text-independent, text-dependent and memory strategies [2]).

A transferred text is a valuable language learning resource, since learners are intimately acquainted with its linguistic peculiarities and content. Therefore it is possible to use this linguistic knowledge already activated in part in a creative and communicative way, for example, comparing the peculiarities of the transferred text and the original one. It should also be mentioned that learners rarely react identically to any given text. That is why a transferred text is a perfect resource of interactive discussion since each person's perception and ways of its verbal expression are different. Thus, within the framework of the cognitive-communicative approach media transfer metaprocedure provides the solution of cognitive, language and communicative educational tasks.

Media transfer metaprocedure activities were implemented in the English Language course for senior students of Bachelor's programme. What follows are some examples of media transfer activities: turning a poem into a prose text (or vice versa); transferring an instruction into a scientific text (or vice versa); turning an essay into an extract from the guide-book; turning a CV text into an autobiography (or vice versa); transferring a character's inner monologue into a letter; turning a newspaper article into a dialogue; turning a conversational discourse into reported speech, etc.

Our experience showed that turning poems into prose texts proved to be of interest to future English philologists. The use of this variant of media transfer metaprocedure activities in working with poetic texts contributed to the strengthening interdisciplinary connections with the course of the English Stylistics course, as "in order to create in perspective teachers' minds an integral system of interconnections between individual facts, knowledge of the foreign language as a subject of study, the study of every subject must be carried out in close connection with others" [4].

It should be mentioned that poetry traditionally forms a significant layer of national culture, the system of native speakers' worldviews and aesthetic values.

According to Lotman (1972) it is “the highest sphere of linguistic art ... it is a special kind of linguistic reality” [3, p. 60]. The first differentiating property of poetry is its orderly form, which is based on the rhythmic and phonetic arrangement of the utterances. It is characterized by fresh, unexpected imagery, use of various layers of vocabulary, epigram-like utterances and brevity of expression (which is shown in elliptical and fragmentary sentences, in detached constructions, in inversion, asyndeton and other syntactical peculiarities) [1].

Some poetry types are culturally specific, responding to the characteristics of the language in which the poet writes. Thus, the knowledge of different forms and linguistic peculiarities of poetry is necessary not only to carry out the philological analysis of the existing text, but also to develop students’ integrative linguistic skills, for example, translation skills. At the same time, poetry is primarily governed by idiosyncratic forms and conventions to suggest varied interpretations of words, or to evoke emotive responses. In a poem to the foreground come those elements of the language that are evaluated subjectively, the author’s individual relation to what he/she describes. Therefore, it is rather important for students to try to grasp the full meaning of the poetic text.

It should be noted, that turning a poem into a prose format accompanied by in-depth analysis of a poetic text compared with its transferred variant promotes not only better understanding of specific use of language means in poetry, but also poetic text organization patterns, their functions. Media transfer metaprocedure also helps students to become aware of the difference between feeling as a reaction to the poem and thinking while analyzing it. It is designed to elicit the effect of the poem on the reader without his/her necessarily understanding every word or every idea contained in it.

Before suggesting students media transfer activities they were given a sample of a transferred text. For example, their task was to read the extract from the poem and its prose variant and to transfer the rest of the poetic text into the prosaic one using some hints for guidance. Then followed a total group discussion concerning the text resulted.

1. Read an extract from the poem “The glories of our blood and state” by James Shirley and its transferred prosaic version.

*The glories of our blood and state
Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armour against Fate;
Death lays his icy hand on kings:
Sceptre and Crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.*

The distinctions of noble birth and high rank are empty things like shadows. Nothing can protect us against death. Death does not spare even kings. Emperors and monarchs must die one day, and be equal in the grave with poor and humble peasants and labourers.

2. Read the rest of the poem and transfer it into prose. Use hints for guidance given below.

*... Some men with swords may reap the field,
And plant fresh laurels where they kill:
But their strong nerves at last must yield;
They tame but one another still:
Early or late
They stoop to fate,
And must give up their murmuring breath
When they, pale captives, creep to death.
The garlands wither on your brow;
Then boast no more your mighty deeds!
Upon Death's purple altar now
See where the victor-victim bleeds.
Your heads must come
To the cold tomb:
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in their dust.*

3. Hints for guidance: transferring poetry.

- ✓ Read the given poetic text attentively once or twice. Be certain that you have made out the message of the poem.
- ✓ Mind that your aim is to turn the poem into a prose text without evaluating or addressing the author's hidden messages or underlying themes.
- ✓ Preserve the author's point of view and time representation.
- ✓ Do not begin with the words: "The poet says that ...".
- ✓ Do not add redundant information (the writer's name, the circumstances under which the passage was written, etc.).
- ✓ Add the necessary parts of speech, such as articles, prepositions, conjunctions, or relative pronouns that have been omitted for the sake of the metre.
- ✓ Rearrange, if necessary, the sentential organization in the order commonly used in prose.
- ✓ For all constructions that are uncommon in prose, but common in poetry, substitute the forms used in ordinary prose.
- ✓ For words or phrases that are archaic or uncommon, substitute words or phrases commonly used in modern English.

✓ *Cancel stylistic devices (e.g. epithets) that contribute nothing to the purport of the sentence, but merely conduce to poetic ornament, or merely suit the necessities of the metre or the rhyme.*

✓ *Make no unnecessary changes of diction. It is not necessary to find a prose equivalent for any and every word used in the poem, so long as the latter is suited to prose.*

✓ *Compare your transferred text with the original one to make sure that your version accurately renders all the essential information in a prose form.*

The sample of the transferred text and the guidance were designed to help students' basic understanding of the media transfer metaprocedure.

Some other examples of media transfer activities are as follows:

- Read the poem "40-Love" by Roger McGough. Transfer it into a prose text. How do the lay-out of the poem and the rhyme pattern contribute to its effectiveness? Compare the two texts. What does the narrative variant lack as compared to the poem? Comment on the difference between the poem and its prose variant in terms of its lexico-grammatical structure and punctuation.

- Read the poem "The Song of Beren and Luthien" by J.R.R. Tolkien and turn it into a prose narrative. Compare the two texts. *What constructions peculiar for poetry but not for prose did you substitute. Comment on the use of stylistic devices in two texts. Pay attention to the use of tropes. What stylistic devices are used as poetic ornament?*

- Read the message written as a poem. Is it a poem in your opinion? Explain your point of view. Turn it into the prose format. Comment on the punctuation in both texts. Is it different? If yes, can you explain why?

This Is Just To Say

*I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox
and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast
Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold. (William Carlos Williams)*

- Read the poem "The Owl and the Pussycat" by Edward Lear and turn it into a fairy-tale. Pay special attention to peculiarities of nonsense poetry and Lear's specific humour. Compare the two texts. Comment on *changes of diction*. *Does the transferred text contain rhythm? If yes, what is it created by?*

- Read the essay “An Indian Bazaar”. Transfer the given essay into an extract from the guide-book. Comment the linguistic features of the original text and its transferred variant in terms of its structure and grammar.
- Read the extract from the novel “The Man of Property” by J. Galsworthy. Turn Soames’ inner monologue into the letter to Irene. Compare the two texts and comment on their linguistic features.

The media transfer tasks suggested imply both class and self-study activities. It should be mentioned that much of the success of this work hinges on the combination of the students’ individual work, pair and small-group work. If media transfer metaprocedure is used as a class-based task, there is no reason why all students should work on the same text or turn the given text into the same format.

According to the students’ surveys, media transfer metaprocedure appeared to be a fruitful experience, which helps them to enrich their linguistic knowledge and develop professional skills. They define their motivation for the activities suggested as enhanced.

In conclusion, we can say that the focus was on the student as a developing being, struggling to decipher the information of a foreign language text and to turn it to another form of presentation. The activities suggested were intended to broaden the students’ cognitive abilities and empower them with the expanding possibilities of the English language use. The implementation of media transfer metaprocedure intensified students’ cognitive activity and promoted the development of text-independent strategies (students activated their linguistic knowledge not directly connected with the text transferred, such as functioning of the lexico-grammatical units according to language norms); text-dependent strategies (students activated their skills of analyzing the internal logical structure of a text and presenting the content of the text in a different linguistic expression taking into account the peculiarities of various formats/styles;); memory strategies (students learned the textual patterns/linguistic peculiarities of the texts of various formats/styles, new words, phrases, etc.). It progressed successfully as students become more proactive and effective in producing coherent texts considering relevant linguistic factors.

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