

CREATIVE WRITING AT AN ADVANCED LEVEL OF GERMAN LANGUAGE IN CLASSES AND INTERNET TANDEM

Summary

Writing is enjoying a great revival in modern societies. For their younger members, it is difficult to imagine the reality with no text messages, e-mails, Internet discussion forums or virtual messengers. Undoubtedly, it is worth taking advantage of this interest in writing in foreign language classes. A proper approach to writing can help support it, and thereby develop intercultural communication competence. Unfortunately, this skill is often considered a marginal one in teaching and learning foreign languages. It is primarily attributed an ancillary role, and its development is often focussed on the product to be assessed, and not the process. It should come as no surprise then that many learners, particularly at lower education levels, perceive writing as an arduous, boring, single-handed activity that is not accompanied by too many hints or suggestions on the part of the teacher. In addition, (linguistic) creativity seems to be – despite its numerous advantages and a status of man's highly desired skill – not sufficiently developed (not only) in the Polish educational context. To date, there have appeared just a few studies devoted to theoretical and empirical reflection on learning foreign languages in Internet tandem.

This publication is devoted to the above mentioned topic reported against the backdrop of developing the skill of writing at an advanced level in German language through creative writing in classes and e-mail tandem. The structure of the monograph reflects its subject and objectives. This thesis is divided into the theoretical part (chapters 1-3), and the empirical part (chapters 4-6). Conclusions and glottodidactic implications (chapter 7) drawn on the basis of a pilot study and basic study are closely related to the main research objective of the thesis, i.e. developing a model of supporting the skill of foreign language writing in advance-level adult learners.

The introduction to the thesis presents the objectives, research hypothesis, main assumptions, and research questions. Chapter one focuses on the notion of (linguistic) creativity and possibilities of supporting it. It endeavours to demonstrate difficulties in defining the term creativity, whose interpretation is often deeply rooted in the context conditioned by time and space. Furthermore, it emphasises that creativity, to a greater or lesser degree, characterises any human, and its development lays within the scope of the modern institutionalised educational system. Chapter two is a critical analysis of the notion of (creative) writing and the possibility of developing it. A number of references of writing in the mother tongue have proved to be indispensable for a more comprehensive character-

istics of foreign-language writing. Chapter three is devoted to teaching/learning foreign languages in tandem with special emphasis on Internet tandem, and the opportunities of supporting work in tandem. The theoretical chapters attempt to put forth the author's own definition of the monograph's key terms.

The empirical part of the thesis begins with chapter four which discusses in detail the objectives, the research hypothesis, main assumptions, and research questions, and presents the characteristics of both the research instruments and the surveyed group. Chapter five contains a detailed analysis of empirical material of the pilot study conducted among 20 Polish students (bachelor studies at the Institute of German Philology of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań). In the tandem part of the pilot study took part a total of 14 students from Christian-Albrechts-Universität in Kiel and Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich. The empirical material was collected during obligatory and optional classes, and while working in e-mail tandems, where creative writing was the central axis. Chapter six focuses on an in-depth analysis of the empirical material developed during classes in practical learning of German, and in e-mail tandems. 41 Polish students (bachelor studies at the Institute of German Philology of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań) and a total of 36 German students from Bielefeld Universität, Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg and Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich were invited to take part in the main study. Moreover, a model of supporting the skill of advance-level foreign-language writing was presented, which had been developed based on selected subject literature. Results of the conducted research reveal that incorporating creative writing into the process of teaching and learning foreign languages in classes and in tandem carries a number of advantages. It allows not only to develop creativity, writing skill, but also intercultural communication competence. A broad range of tasks in creative writing, of which only selected ones have been presented in this thesis, enables, among others, supporting work on a lexical sub-system or text, and differentiating the degree of difficulty depending on target group needs.

Chapter seven contains conclusions and glottodidactic implications drawn on the basis of theoretical considerations and conducted research with particular focus on the adult recipient at the advanced level of German language mastery. The conclusions can be a starting point for further research in the key issues of this thesis. The monograph is concluded with a summary, and supplemented by an annex containing, among others, sheets of research tools and more extensive excerpts of studies developed as part of creative writing.