

Processes and Practices in Writing. A Conceptualization from a Dialogical Perspective

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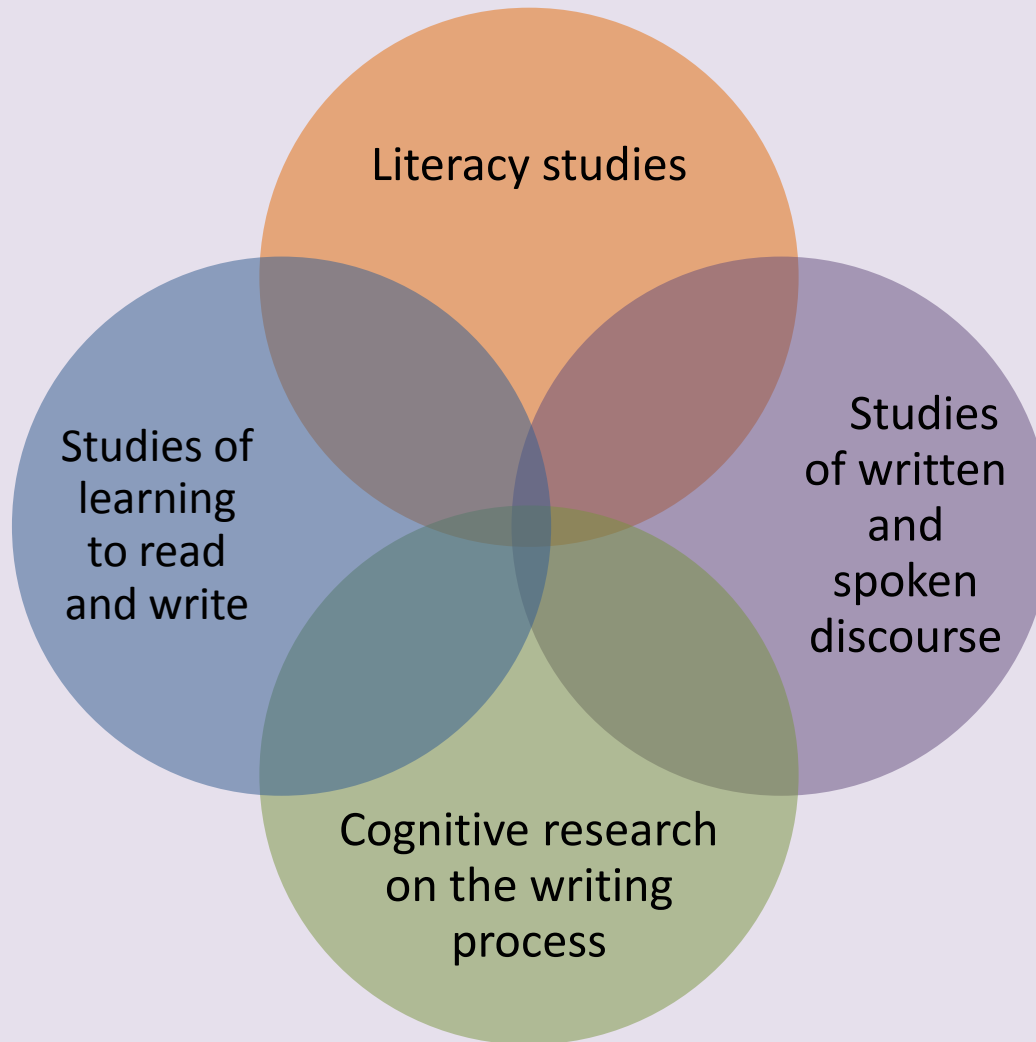
Context

- Field: psycholinguistics
- dialogical psycholinguistics deals with questions of the situated processes of speaking and writing
- These processes are not separable from social practices of writing

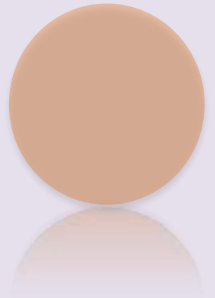
Focus

- Conceptualization of writing from a dialogical perspective
- building on a dialogic understanding of all language related processes
- notion of language and thinking as formulated in Soviet psychology and linguistics of the 1920s and 1930s (Jakubinsky, Vygotsky, Voloshinov and Bakhtin)

Current traditions in writing research

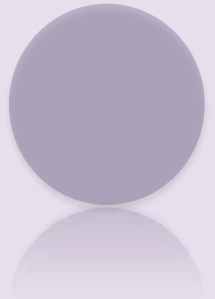


Literacy studies



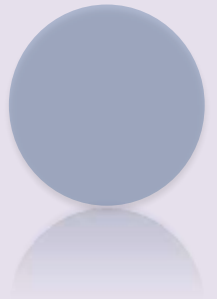
- Anthropological perspective on writing (Goody, Ong, and others)
- Social and cognitive changes made possible by the introduction of a new medium
- Focus on new practices and forms of interaction
- Writing or written interaction is not studied
- Theoretical assumption that writing is the motor of development

Linguistic studies of written and spoken discourse



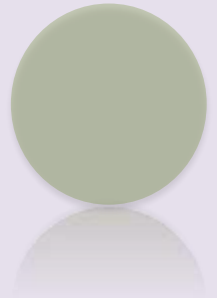
- Ethnographic or sociolinguistic perspectives (Hymes, Gumperz, Tannen and others)
- Written texts in focus
- Compared to spoken discourse
- Continuum of written and spoken linguistic features
- Theoretically, the characteristics of the medium disappear

Reading and writing acquisition



- Learning as constructive act of the individual
- Relationship of writing and speaking as a fact to be discovered, not as socially conventionalized
- Writing as knowing the rules of transforming speech into letters
- Studied in decontextualized test situations

Cognitive writing process research



- Writing as problem solving task, not as communicative activity
- Empirical evidence from thinking aloud protocols
- Computer metaphor for human cognition
- Focus on the isolated thinker's mind

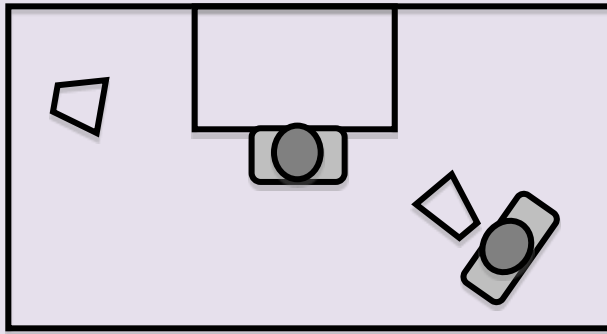
What was different in the Soviet tradition?

- Writing and speaking never separated
- Two related but not identical forms of speech activity
- Social origin of all speech forms
- In writing, inner dialogue is crucial
- Focus on the utterance, on what the writer does:
way of addressing, way of symbolizing and
indicating, way of positioning

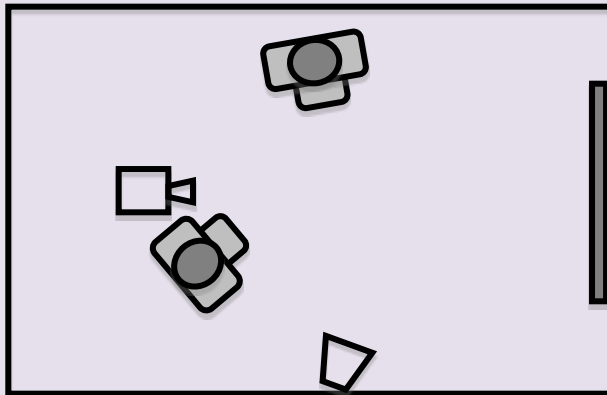
Theory-building empirical study

- Based on auto-confrontation method in workplace psychology (Clot and colleagues)
- Videotaping of writing episodes
- Co-analysis of the videotaped writing episode in dialogue between the writer and myself
- Reconstructions of writing processes and writing practices in dialogue
- The co-analysis is also videotaped

Constellations



Videotaping of writing episode



Videotaping of auto-confrontation in dialogue

Why this method?

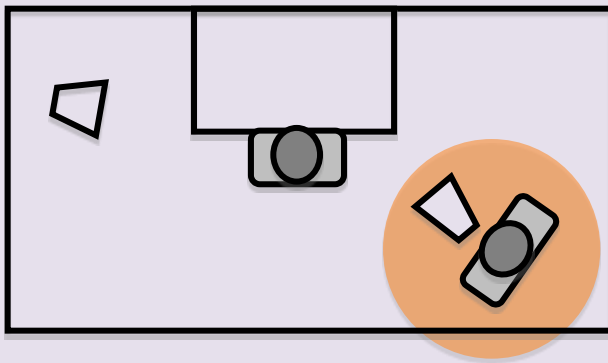
- Focus on the activity, not on the traces of the activity in the product
- Writing, conceived of as activity, is not fully accessible to observation or to introspection
- Transport of the writing activity into a new context
- Understanding by adding a new perspective

Why this method?

- The subjective position of the writer is included, not speculated about
- Researcher is not an outside observer, but takes part (as a reader? as a writer herself?)
- Intersubjectivity is constructed in dialogue

Questions

- Richness of the activity: tension between a conventionalized, community-related pole (“genre”) and a individual pole (“style”)?
- Role of the text camera perspective?



Reader?

Inner reader?

Super-addressee?

