



Introduction

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Russia is a place where subway stops, major roads, and city squares are named after writers. Particularly in Moscow and St. Petersburg, you can scarcely take a step without walking into some scene from literary history. One of my favorite pedestrian routes in the capital takes me past Pushkin Square, a metro station named for Chekhov, a monument to the poet Sergey Yesenin, and the park where the devil arrives on Earth in the opening incident of Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita* (a sign is posted reminding visitors not to talk to strangers).

Perhaps it is at least partly due to the richness of this literary heritage that *academic* writing has only lately become part of the conversation about the future of Russian higher education. As will be evident in the chapters in this volume, it is still not remotely uncommon to encounter the attitude—dissonant in the land of Tolstoy and Akhmatova—that Russian scholars and students need help with writing. What is meant, of course, is that Russian academics need to increase the volume of research published in highly-ranked international (and usually anglophone) journals and that university instructors—like their counterparts worldwide—are frustrated with the quality of student writing. The reasons offered are many: the accretion of habits from the Soviet period in which Russian scholars were largely isolated from the global academic community (see Chapter 1 and Chapter 3), even older pedagogical traditions in which Russian writing—as in the Anglosphere—was closely linked with the study of literature and other modes of communication were neglected (see Chapter 2 and Chapter 11), lack of familiarity with the lingua franca of international education and scholarly publishing (English) and internationally accepted rhetorical norms (see Chapter 1, Chapter 3, Chapter 4, and Chapter 8), structural problems in the Russian education system with its newfound emphasis on testing (see Chapter 10), and straightforward lack of resources (see Chapter 4).

Efforts to address academic writing in Russia have become particularly urgent in the context of state efforts to converge with international education standards. In 2003, Russia entered the Bologna Process, a multi-national European agreement to align higher education systems to ensure academic mobility for faculty and students. Then in 2013, the Russian Ministry of Education initiated Project 5-100, an effort to launch five Russian universities into

the top 100 of major international university rankings. This program included substantial funding for incentives for faculty who publish in international journals and for support services to help them do so.

Because English is the lingua franca of international academic publishing, the work of advancing this agenda has mostly been delegated to specialists in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) who direct and staff newly created writing centers and writing programs at Russian universities. The first American-style Russian writing center was founded at the New Economic School (NES), a private graduate school, in 2011. The Academic Writing Center (AWC) at HSE University, Russia's largest public university, quickly followed. Since then, 11 writing centers—some freestanding and some housed in language departments—have sprung up across the country, and a professional organization, the National Writing Centers Consortium (NWCC), has been established to support this burgeoning area of pedagogy and research. The NWCC hosted its first conference in Moscow in 2018, and research on academic writing has been a feature of many national conferences on the teaching of English. In short, there is a rapidly growing community in this area that did not exist ten years ago and which stands to exert some influence not only on the future of academic research and higher education in Russia but in other parts of the region, as interest in writing and writing pedagogy spreads to other parts of the former USSR (see Chapter 1).

Though Russia has its own tradition of writing in the academy and its own academic publishers and journals, to serve the current needs, writing pedagogy models have largely been adapted from abroad. This has included concepts like academic literacy and multiliteracy (see Chapter 1, Chapter 3, Chapter 8, and Chapter 10) and institutional models like the writing center (see Chapter 5, Chapter 6, and Chapter 7). This does not mean, however, that this conversation only concerns English writing or that these practitioners wish to create a siloed, privileged space for English. Rather, there is an effort to make concepts like academic literacy translingual (see Chapter 1), and many support programs offer their services in both English and Russian (see Chapter 6 and Chapter 7). Pressure to publish is intense regardless of the language scholars are working in (see Chapter 3 and Chapter 4). Nevertheless, Russian higher education must contend with the overwhelming demand for writing and writing services in English.

The Aims of this Volume

The aim of this collection is to offer the reader a broad view of the changing landscape for academic writing, writing pedagogy, and writing centers

in Russia by individuals with on-the-ground experience. It includes Russian writing scholars living and working in Russian universities, Russian-born writing scholars currently teaching in the United States, and U. S.-born expatriates with experience teaching in Russia. In many ways, it can be viewed as an extension of the work done by the contributors to Pavel Zemliansky and Kirk St. Amant's (2016) *Rethinking Post-Communist Rhetoric* published when the regional conversation was still nascent. As Tatiana Glushko notes in Chapter 5 of this collection, Thaiss, Brauer, Carlino, Ganobcsik-Williams and Sinha's (2012) worldwide survey of writing programs included no entries from Russia. With a special focus on the Russian context, we show how research in this area has developed regionally since the middle of the decade—a truly productive and transformative period in terms of the establishment of institutions (like the NWCC) and the development of research, which in the Russian context has come to embrace approaches rooted in academic literacy (Lillis & Curry, 2010) as well as multilingual approaches (Korotkina, 2018).

We therefore also contribute to the growing conversation about the internationalization of higher education models (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Brooks & Waters, 2011; Rajakumar, 2018) and the field of writing studies (Arnold et al., 2017; Bazerman et al., 2012). This is in some ways a story about the importation of anglophone models of writing pedagogy that, as Christiane Donahue (2009) noted a decade ago, have been the focus of much research under the rubric of internationalization. But it is also a story about the uniquely local character of writing interventions, which has also been the hallmark of so much research in this field (Muchiri et al., 1995).

While Western-born and trained individuals like myself have been a part of the development of academic writing in Russia, much of the conversation is being driven by people whose lives and careers have been centered there. Unlike in the Middle East, East Asia, and other parts of the world, there are no branch campuses of U. S. universities in Russia (though some private universities maintain dual-diploma programs), and only a few Western-trained specialists (be they U. S.-trained compositionists or applied linguists based in Europe or the UK). While a few practitioners are familiar with the U. S.-based field of rhetoric and composition, many more are trained as ESP/EAP teachers and scholars. As the reader will see from this collection, this means that Russian writing programs are pulling together resources from a variety of places and adapting them to their own needs. It also means that the development of this field is influenced by a deep understanding of the unique structural challenges Russian scholars and teachers face, of the idiosyncrasies of the Russian educational bureaucracy, and of the unique linguistic and cultural context for writing.

A few words about my positionality as editor may be warranted here. After completing my Ph.D. at the University of Texas at Austin in 2013, I was hired as the Associate Director of the New Economic School's Writing and Communication Center (WCC), founded to support the curriculum of its elite, American-style liberal arts bachelor's program (Olga Aksakalova, the first director of the WCC, joins me in Chapter 7 of this collection). Because I have therefore been present for much of the recent history of academic writing in Russia and am also very familiar with international academic norms (including the process of publishing a book with an American university press), I am well-positioned to help mediate this discussion. However, on top of my non-Russian biography, the institution I work for is unusual in the broader landscape of Russian higher education. In addition to its liberal arts bachelor's curriculum, the faculty who teach at NES are international. Indeed, one must hold a Ph.D. from a Western university to hold the rank of assistant professor. From a Russian perspective, this is a pretty rarified environment in which to establish a writing center. NES gives us the institutional flexibility and the international orientation to serve students in the best way we know how, using methods largely adapted from the United States.

The pioneering role of NES as well as the institutional growth and leadership of HSE helps explain why there are several contributions from the faculty of those institutions (as does the fact that our funding models and teaching loads give faculty comparatively more freedom to engage in research activities). At most other institutions, writing centers, programs, and curricula must attempt to fit into the complicated bureaucratic structure of higher education and serve a constituency that is far less habituated (indeed is often quite skeptical) of Western-identified educational models. In fact, the WCC at NES remains the only bilingual writing center in Russia that serves undergraduates as its primary constituency. We also seem to have the only undergraduate program in which there are required writing-intensive courses in both Russian and English. Most of the other centers and programs exist to serve research faculty and sometimes graduate students. As this volume will demonstrate, Russian writing centers have in many cases expanded well beyond the consultancy model we use at NES to become *de facto* academic writing departments or programs. The aforementioned Academic Writing Center at HSE University, Moscow (described in detail in Chapter 6), for example, seeks to "meet the growing needs of our faculty for participating in the global academic community and improving the international visibility of the research and educational services provided by HSE," offering courses, workshops, and individual consultations for "faculty, researchers and students who write for international publications and take part in global research con-

ferences” (Academic Writing Center, n.d.) Elsewhere in Moscow, the Academic Writing University Center at the National University of Science and Technology (where Director Elena Bazanova also serves as the President of the NWCC)

Provides language support services to university PhD students, researchers and faculty for every stage of their academic career and for any kind of writing, e.g., abstract writing, conference papers, dissertation and thesis writing, grant proposal writing, research papers, etc. in English. (Academic Writing University Center, n.d.)

Writing centers and programs are also active well beyond the Russian capitals (Moscow and St. Petersburg). The Samara Academic Consultancy Center, part of the modern languages department at Samara University, was established to “provide consultations on article writing for English journals, assistance for participation in international conferences, workshops for mastering skills of foreign language communicative competence for both teaching staff and students” (Samara Academic Consultancy Center, n.d.). Far to the east in Siberia, the Center for Academic Writing “Impulse” “delivers Academic English language programs to University faculty and researchers and provides support to them in developing scientific writing skills to get published in international journals” (Center for Academic Writing “Impulse”, n.d.).

The list of National Writing Centers Consortium members goes on to include writing and linguistic support centers at the I. M. Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University (Moscow), the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (Moscow), the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology (Moscow), ITMO University (St. Petersburg), Tomsk State University (Tomsk), and Tomsk Polytechnic University (Tomsk; National Writing Center Consortium, n.d.).

My aim in this collection is therefore to offer as broad as possible a view of how writing pedagogy is conceived of and practiced, which means that much of the discussion will center on the teaching of writing to researchers and not the more familiar paradigm (for a U. S. audience) of teaching writing to late teens and young twenty-somethings (though this is dealt with in Part Four). Writing education for school children and undergraduates is, as it is in most places, a concern, but for the moment, researchers are the institutional priority and are thus where a lot of the effort is being directed. Writing pedagogy and research are therefore less focused on the freshman seminar and more focused on professional development modules offered to faculty who range from early

postdoctoral researchers to experienced scholars, some of whom may indeed be reluctant to start publishing in English or conforming to international (anglophone) norms of academic communication. Writing centers, as they do in other places, offer individual consultations, but these are usually about work that is intended for publication and therefore demand different techniques than the ones used in undergraduate writing centers. This collection is therefore a unique opportunity to look at how writing pedagogy and writing center practices are being adapted for multi-lingual faculty, a constituency that has not heretofore been very visible even in the international scholarship on writing but whose needs are nevertheless real and urgent.

The writing scholars in this collection are focused on what motivates their colleagues to write and to learn about writing, on the types of interventions that work for faculty, and on the technologies that might help busy professionals save time. These concerns are deeply pragmatic and locally situated, but they have much to teach our distant colleagues. If academia is to become a kind of global public sphere in which ideas can be discussed and debated—and if English is to be its lingua franca—then anglophones will need to learn from the experiences of their international colleagues as much as those colleagues will need to adapt in order to be published (Lillis & Curry, 2010). And as I think is clear from the tenor of these essays, we the authors and our colleagues are ready for international dialogue and cooperation.

Plan of the Collection

The first section of this book presents an overview of the current context for academic writing in Russia. First, in her agenda-setting essay, “Academic Writing in Russia Beyond Zero Point,” Irina Korotkina examines the challenges faced by current Russian writing programs, which must cope with the baggage of this field’s anglophone attachments as well as the residue of the Soviet Union, in which the sharing of scientific research for broad audiences was discouraged. From Korotkina’s perspective, Russia needs to develop a strong academic literacy curriculum in the Russian language (as well as minority languages) and not only in English.

In Chapter Two, Elena Getmanskaya examines historical precedents for today’s conversation about writing in Russia. Using extensive archival resources, the author illuminates the practice of teaching writing in Russia in the nineteenth century, when the use of essay writing in secondary and tertiary education was moving from a strictly philological exercise associated with language and literature to a research activity designed to develop the overall humanitarian knowledge and civic personhood of high school graduates and university

students. Getmanskaya describes the conflicts that this transition engendered and debates over best practices that foreshadow the current conversation.

In Chapter Three, Natalya Smirnova and Anna Guseva dive deeper into existing writing and pedagogical traditions by examining the learning histories and current writing practices of experienced researchers in the domain of art history. Based on interviews with six multilingual Russian art historians, Smirnova and Guseva reveal the various formal and informal ways in which these scholars have learned to write, mostly in the absence of writing courses. Participants discuss the ways in which the Soviet period shaped the rhetorical orientation of their discipline and the challenges they presently face—access to museums, libraries, and scholarly databases—that are shared by their colleagues in other disciplines.

Having established some of the ways in which the past informs present conditions, Chapter Four, “They Teach Writing but They Do Not Write,” turns to a quite current conundrum: the educators tasked with teaching their colleagues in other disciplines to write research papers in English—Russian English teachers—tend not to publish their own work. Author Svetlana Bogolepova indicates that this has become an issue of special concern in the context of Project 5-100, where all faculty are expected and heavily incentivized to publish. Based on a survey of English faculty at several large Russian universities, Bogolepova offers reasons why language faculty lag behind and provides recommendations for how the issue ought to be addressed.

Because university writing centers have been created for the specific purpose of addressing these needs, Part Two focuses on the development of the writing center model in Russia. In Chapter Five, Tatiana Glushko presents the results of interviews with writing center and writing program administrators in Russia, arguing that the development of academic writing in this country is a “balancing act” between immediate needs driven by the market for academic publication and “long-term educational goals for internationalization” as well as between Russian and anglophone traditions that are sometimes incompatible.

Chapter Six then offers a close look at one of Russia’s original writing centers: the AWC at HSE-Moscow. Director Svetlana Suchkova demonstrates how writing center structures and methodologies have been adapted to the Russian institutional framework in order to meet the specific needs of faculty researchers. Through data systematically collected on the effectiveness of the Center’s activities, this chapter finds that the AWC model is effective and can be generalized to other institutions in the Russian Federation.

Chapter Seven brings us to peer tutoring—a core aspect of writing center work in the United States and Europe that is nascent in Russia. Olga

Aksakalova, and myself analyze the results of a collaboration among peer tutors at the New Economic School and trainees at LaGuardia Community College in New York City. During the Spring of 2018, participants were asked to take part in a series of mediated exchanges through a Wordpress blog, reflecting on their experiences. Based on our analysis of their posts and final reflections, we argue that this exercise helped inculcate a sense of transnational professional identity among peer tutors and enabled a sustained discussion of the fraught questions of authority in peer tutoring. We also make recommendations for the use of international exchanges as a training practice for writing center staff.

Though multilingualism and the need for bilingual (even tri-lingual) writing pedagogies is a feature of many of these chapters, English still looms very large on this landscape. It is the target language for most researchers seeking publication in international journals and at times a critical hurdle for them to overcome. As such, applied linguists are playing a considerable role in both the research on and the teaching of academic writing. Part Three is therefore dedicated to the language issue.

Chapter Eight presents the application Paper Cat, developed by researchers at HSE University, Perm. This program, as Elizaveta Smirnova, Svetlana Strinyuk, and Viacheslav Lanin argue, goes beyond general grammar checkers like Grammarly to identify the specific linguistic features of academic discourse based on an analysis of the existing corpus of academic writing across a variety of fields. The purpose is to assist second-language (L₂) writers in the production of their own texts and to assist EAP instructors in evaluating the writing of their students and writing center clients as well as designing lessons that target the features of academic discourse that cause the most problems.

Chapter Nine continues this computational theme. Olga Vinogradova, Anna Viklova, and Mikhail Paporotskiy present the results of corpus research on first-language (L₁) interference in the use of punctuation in English. Punctuation, they argue, is both understudied and under-taught to English language learners, and the results of their study of intermediate and advanced writing by Russian students shows that Russian speakers continue to apply Russian punctuation rules to English and do so in ways that make their communications less clear and effective. They note the most important differences and argue that punctuation simply cannot be ignored in language teaching, which it unfortunately often is.

Part Four discusses the teaching of writing in undergraduate classrooms. University teaching during the Soviet period largely favored oral assessment, but writing as a mode of testing students' skills and knowledge is becoming

more common. Students taking the unified state exam (a university entrance exam) are now tasked with writing an essay modelled after the writing tasks on international English tests, and more top-tier universities are offering academic writing courses to their students, usually, again, in English. As Tatiana Golechkova indicates in Chapter Ten, the testing regime along with other features of secondary school preparation leads to a mismatch in expectations between students and university faculty. Golechkova applies the research on secondary-to-tertiary transition problems to the Russian context, examining the sources of these mismatched expectations and suggesting ways in which academic writing classrooms adopting an academic literacies framework can assist students in their transition to university studies.

Finally, Chapter Eleven explores the specific disciplinary context of the literature classroom, as Irina Kuznetsova-Simpson argues for the substitution of linguistic approaches with reader-response approaches to the teaching of writing to undergraduate students in literature courses. Drawing on her experience teaching an English-language drama and theatre course, Kuznetsova-Simpson further makes the case that performance in literature courses is “a very effective bridge between both skills—reading and writing— as well as a tool for sharpening students’ analytical, creative, and autonomous writing skills.”

Final Words

Lying beneath the surface of each one of these essays is an essential question: why write? Why write for an international audience? Why write in English? This is a question that our authors study while also seeking to answer it for themselves. That a group of scholar-teachers in Russia should want to get together to produce a volume for an American university press is not an obvious proposition. For one thing, many of us are teachers who primarily transmit knowledge through the classroom. Furthermore, many of the research questions that arise do so out of local and institutional interests without always having obvious connections to broader disciplinary concerns at the international level. If they felt compelled, nevertheless, to write, our contributors could all have easily published these essays in Russian journals, and they could have done so with a much faster turnaround time than an edited collection affords. So why do this?

Some of the possible answers are unsatisfying. As Bogolepova’s research suggests (Chapter 4), it may be because such writing is—through financial incentives or with the threat of job loss—demanded by one’s institution and one’s government. As the practitioners represented in this book attest, the

case beyond professional survival is often unclear to the very writers these programs were designed to help. Yet they are motivated in their work and in their chapter contributions by the idea that there is something fundamentally satisfying and valuable about participating in a broader academic conversation. By contributing to this volume, by attending conferences abroad, by inviting prominent scholars to conferences in Russia, the members of this field are seeking not only international expertise to assist them in their own efforts but international presence and influence. It is our earnest hope that our colleagues abroad find things of value in our locally-inflected but globally-oriented work.

Perhaps the signal contribution that Russian writing programs and scholars can make is the very fact that so much of this work is being done with professional writers. To be honest, given my American bias and pedagogical interest in students and the freshman seminar, I have sometimes regarded this researcher focus as a kind of problem, as if it were drawing resources away from the urgent work of preparing the next generation. But what we are seeing here in Russia is no less than the transformation of an entire culture of academic communication, from the top down. These changes involve not only the language and modalities of communication but new standards of academic ethics and a new understanding of the purpose of writing and publishing. That this transformation should be uneven is only to be expected, but the essays presented here are evidence of the fact that it is occurring. In contrast to the inward, nationalist turn of Russian and U. S. politics seen over the past several years, the globalization of academic culture seems to be continuing apace.

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