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Abstract template

EVALUATION SOFTWARE IN ASSESSMENT OF L2 ACADEMIC WRITING

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Tertiary education oriented on the English language places L2 students between Scilla and Charibdis of high assessment standards and the lack of writing practice in Academic English. The task of giving students a tool to learn English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and providing their teachers with a tool to assess students' papers efficiently made a group of researchers from Higher School of Economics (HSE) develop an application which fulfils twofold task: it analyses subject-determined written academic discourse of competent writers against a set of formalized criteria (academic style markers) and compares the results with those of research papers written by students.

We assume that evaluating students' written papers in terms of style can be automated by using a special software tagging style markers in the text. Evaluation of statistical bounds of style markers occurrence requires implementing methods and tools of corpus linguistic. To annotate texts GATE Developer [1] software is used, which provides a wide range of capabilities for text processing

Implementing Evaluation Software and a corpus-based approach to teaching EAP gave evidence to the level of confidence students demonstrated completing their writing assessment tasks. Statistics show that some aspects of EAP need more serious training (excessive use of logic connectors and verbs of broad semantics), while frequency of some patterns is close to the level demonstrated by competent L1 writers: use of nouns, postpositional and prepositional attributes; percentage of words with abstract suffixes, etc.). Accordingly, the results of this pilot research in "data driven learning" (Johns, 1984) gave basis for further improvements of the Evaluation Software and facilitated methodology development for learning through a corpus-based approach.

The results of the research can be used in academic writing analysis to identify most significant features of domain academic discourse and will allow to evaluate the quality of papers written by students against a number of standardized formal criteria.

