Introduction: The objective and scope of this book

The idea for the present book arose out of the desire to make text linguistics, the study of meaningful linguistic units beyond the sentence level, fruitful for the development of text competence ("Textkompetenz") in the sense of Portmann-Tselikas & Schmölzer-Eibinger (2008), i.e., the competence to read, write and learn from texts (cf. also Preußer/Sennewald 2012), also termed literacy (Banzer/Kruse 2011: 2). Thematically, this book therefore covers the wide range from text linguistic foundations (Part I) via text reception (Part II) and text production (Part III) to writing instruction (Part IV) and multiliteracy (Part V). These parts are related in the following manner: The text-linguistic foundations in Part I are a prerequisite for understanding what makes a sequence of words, sentences and nonverbal representations a meaningful whole rather than a mere agglomerate of unrelated units. These text-linguistic foundations, however, are insufficient to explain the extent of a text's readability and comprehensibility. To sensitize readers to what makes texts readable and comprehensible, or unreadable and hard to understand, and to familiarize them with methods of comprehensibility assessment, Part II of this book is therefore devoted to text comprehension and text comprehensibility including methods of comprehensibility assessment. The ability to anticipate their prospective readers' comprehension and interpretation of their texts and thus to write comprehensibly is a major asset that distinguishes proficient writers from weaker ones (cf. Kellogg 2008; Bereiter 1980; Sections 7.1 and 7.2). This ability and further components of writing competence as well as writing skills development and writing processes will be addressed in Part III. Familiarity with writing process models helps writers to analyze their own writing processes and to pinpoint potential weaknesses in them, which can then be focused on in writing instruction and coaching. Knowledge about writing competence development assists both writing instructors and subject-domain teachers in the design of writing assignments and more complex writing arrangements which are adequate for the competence levels that their students have already attained and the realistic assessment of what text quality can be expected from students at certain stages of their literacy development. How writing development can be fostered, especially in tertiary education, including the design of adequate writing assignments and promoting the functions of writing for clearer thinking will be covered in Part IV of this book. Especially in tertiary education, writing fulfils an important function for sharpening one's ideas and better reasoning. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that attention be devoted to this essential skill. Why this is so is very illustratively described by Gage (1986: 24):

> "Writing is thinking made tangible, thinking that can be examined because it is on the page and not in the head invisibly floating around. Writing is thinking that can

> be stopped and tinkered with. It is a way of holding thought still enough to examine its structure, its flaws. The road to clearer understanding of one's thoughts is travelled in paper. It is through an attempt to find words for ourselves in which to express related ideas that we often discover what we think."

Writing assessment will not be addressed since there is an abundance of literature, including an academic journal, *Assessing Writing*, on this topic, which could fill a volume of its own. For a bibliography on writing assessment, see Silva & Brice (2004: 73); for second-language writing assessment, see Hamp-Lyons (1991).

The last part of this book, Part V, is devoted to differences between L1 and L2 composition and their interrelationships. Multiliteracy as literacy in more than one language is of central importance in a globalized world, where literacy in English as the *lingua franca* of cross-cultural communication is a prerequisite for professional success in an increasing number of disciplines and professional domains. The concept of multiliteracy as it is used here is one component of the New London Group's (1996) multiliteracies concept (see Section 8.1). They use it in the plural encompassing both a) literacy in more than one language and their cultural contexts as covered by the multiliteracy concept used here, and b) literacy in more than one medium, a second component that will not be addressed in this volume though it is not deemed less important.[1] Multiliteracy and thus multilinguality (or at least bilinguality) does not only play a role in Part V of this book. In the other parts, a contrastive English, German and in some contexts also French approach is taken, where deemed appropriate, to create an awareness of language-specific constructions and their rhetorical functions and thus to sensitize readers for translation-related issues and foster their translation competence, which is considered an important component of multiliteracy.

Following Lea & Street (1998; 2006), writing instruction and, more generally, literacy development, in academic contexts can be conceptualized in three overlapping models: a) a study skills model, b) an academic socialization model and c) an academic literacies model (for details, see Section 8). The study skills model focuses on surface features of language or the lexical and grammatical correctness of texts. The academic socialization model is concerned with students' acculturation into disciplinary and subject-related discourses and genres and focuses on aspects of writing that can only be taught and acquired in or in connection with subject-matter courses. The academic literacies model

> "is similar in many ways to the academic socialization model, except that it views the processes involved in acquiring appropriate and effective uses of literacy as more complex, nuanced, situated, and involving both epistemological issues and

[1] On the debates surrounding the use of the singular *multiliteracy* or plural *multiliteries*, see also Lillis & Scott (2007).

social processes, including power relations among people, institutions, and social identities" (Lea/Street 2006: 368 f.).

In this book, literacy development will be addressed on all three levels, from the development of writing skills as a central study skill in compensatory writing courses (study skills) to writing arrangements in writing-intensive seminars (academic socialization) and progressive writing-across-the-curriculum (WAC) designs (academic literacy).

Especially Chapter 8 "Best-practice approaches to writing instruction" addresses the post-Bologna Reform era with its new challenges for students' (multi-)literacy development resulting from shorter degree programs, a larger student intake in universities and thus more heterogeneous entrance qualifications including writing skills among students. All of these factors make it necessary to foster students' writing skills development in a more efficient and effective manner than this had been acceptable in the pre-Bologna Reform era. In the United States, a similar situation had to be mastered some 35 years ago (Lillis/Scott 2007: 8). Against this background, it is not surprising that many developments that could be observed in the US more than three decades ago have now been taken over in Germany and other European countries (for an overview, see the articles in Björk et al. 2003b). Among these developments is the establishment of writing centres as central support structures in universities.

Research on writing skills development and approaches to teaching writing are necessarily embedded in their respective national educational contexts. Unsurprisingly, this has led to national discourses which, to a certain extent, are being conducted independently. The present book is among the first to combine the US-American discourse on literacy development in the fields of composition studies, (applied) linguistics and rhetoric with the German discourse on writing skills development mainly conducted in Germanic language departments. Both have made major contributions to the literacies development discourse without always taking notice of each other to a sufficient extent. For example, I have not found invaluable German work on academic literacy development, such as the studies by Steinhoff (2007) and Pohl (2007), quoted in American publications. This is probably due to German-language publications in general hardly being read in the US, and publications related to English language not sufficiently taken account of in departments of Germanic languages in Germany. This book tries to bridge the gap by bringing both discourses together.

In embarking on this endeavour, I had to decide in which language to write this book, my mother tongue German or my L2 and working language English. This was no easy decision. I am a supporter of the use of German as a language of academic discourse and I would like to reach a German-speaking as well as an English-speaking audience. To reach those who are responsible

for writing instruction in German universities, writing this book in German might have been the best choice. By writing in German, however, I would have risked that the bulk of the German literature that I reviewed in this book and that I have not found quoted in English literature, although it makes important contributions to the discourse, would never have been read in English-speaking countries. Therefore, I decided to write this book in English. In this manner, I could also present research findings so far published only in German in English and thus ensure that they can be taken account of in the English-speaking world since they deserve to be acknowledged. I apologize in advance to my German-speaking colleagues for not using our language, however, I felt taking this risk was justifiable because I know that they can cope with English as the *lingua franca* of academic discourse, not only in English departments. I hope that this book contributes to a cross-cultural exchange between writing researchers and teachers from different countries. As the Director of the Centre for Competence Development at Justus Liebig University (JLU), Giessen/Germany (ZfbK 2014), and the project leader of the JLU-wide project "Starting with Success" ("Einstieg mit Erfolg") for the improvement of students' study skills and the quality of teaching at JLU funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF 2012) in the time span from 2012 to 2016, I also hope that this book will make at least a modest contribution to the adaptation of university education at JLU and other European universities to the post-Bologna Reform requirements.

The book addresses different audiences: It provides bachelor, master and post-graduate students as well as writing instructors embarking on research projects investigating writing skills and their development with an overview of the discourses in these areas and introduces them to the pertinent models and theories on which this research can be based. At the same time, it assists them in developing their own writing skills. It does so by creating an awareness of defects in texts and how they affect text comprehensibility and by providing insights into the phases of writing processes and writing development. By doing so, it helps its readers to pinpoint the steps in which they can improve their own text production. Writing teachers, writing centre staff, such as writing tutors and writing fellows, as well as subject-domain teachers interested in founding their writing instruction, writing assignments and feedback on research-based findings will be provided with a thorough introduction to the related areas of research and their results. University administrators and program coordinators can inform themselves about best-practice approaches of how to establish writing instruction and support at the different levels of a university reaching from individual courses (micro-level) via entire programs (meso-level) to central support structures such as teaching and writing centres (macro-level). These latter aspects are focused on in Chapter 8.

I hope that academic literacy development will benefit from this book and would be grateful for any comments and suggestions for improvement, which may be sent to my e-mail address susanne.goepferich@zfbk.uni-giessen.de.

Giessen, December 2014 Susanne Göpferich

Part I
Textlinguistic Foundations

1 Basic concepts

1.1 Text linguistics and text

Text linguistics is a relatively recent field of linguistics that evolved in the 1960s and 1970s, a period that marks the so-called *text-linguistic turn*. Text linguistics focuses on linguistic units beyond the sentence level that are perceived as entities but can no longer be described and explained within the confines of syntax. Central questions that text linguists are interested in are:

1. What constitutes a text, i.e., what makes a mere agglomerate of sentences – and sometimes also smaller or even non-linguistic units – a text (text constitution, textuality)?
2. How are texts delimited, i.e., what marks their beginning and their end (text delimitation)?
3. How can texts be classified (text typology)?
4. How are texts understood (text comprehension and text comprehensibility)?

Three other questions that are closely related to the previous ones but that are usually not covered in monographs on text linguistics are the following:

5. How are texts produced, especially in a competent manner (text production)?
6. In what respects does text production in a writer's mother tongue (L1) differ from text production in a second or foreign language (L2)?
7. How does text production competence in the L1 and the L2 develop, how are they interrelated and how can they be taught?

These are the central questions that will be tackled in the course of this book. Answers to these questions, especially to questions 1 and 2, have been provided from two perspectives: a) a text-grammatical and text-semantic perspective, i.e., a bottom-up perspective from the sentence to the text, and b) a pragmatic or functional-communicative perspective, i.e., a top-down perspective from the text to the individual sentences. Before we take a closer look at these approaches, the central concept of text linguistics, 'text', needs to be explained.

Despite numerous attempts to define what a text is, there is no universally accepted text definition (Brinker 1973: 9; Reiß 1983: 2; Heinemann/Viehweger 1991: 13). Trying to find such a definition would be a useless endeavour since what is considered, or should be considered, to be a text depends on the research question asked (Brinker 1973: 9). In what follows, I will therefore confine myself to outlining a few aspects that, to my mind, should be taken into account when attempting to define the concept of 'text'.