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ИНТЕГРИРОВАННЫЕ ПИСЬМЕННЫЕ ЗАДАНИЯ КАК СРЕДСТВО ПОВЫШЕНИЯ АУТЕНТИЧНОСТИ В ОБУЧЕНИИ ИНОСТРАННОМУ ЯЗЫКУ

В статье рассматривается специфика интегрированных заданий на письмо и их дидактический потенциал в процессе обучения иностранному языку. Представлен обзор различных подходов к определению сущности анализируемых заданий, описана их типология в зависимости от предлагаемых опор, а также раскрыта номенклатура необходимых умений и навыков, позволяющих успешно выполнять данный тип заданий. Отдельное внимание уделяется когнитивным процессам, задействованным при выполнении интегрированных заданий на письмо. В частности, освещается проблема клипового мышления, подразумевающая трудности при аналитической обработке большого объема информации и дальнейшего порождения собственных высказываний. Важной чертой работы является подход к рассмотрению интегрированных письменных заданий через призму понятий «медиация» и «медиативные умения». Новизна работы также заключается в рассмотрении интегрированных заданий как инструмента интенсификации аутентичности учебного процесса, что предполагает возможность имплементации полученных знаний, умений и навыков не только в академической среде, но и в процессе повседневной практики, что в свою очередь отвечает требованиям компетентностного подхода. Практическая часть статьи посвящена описанию результатов эксперимента, в рамках которого были проведены занятия в старшей школе, направленные на обучение учащихся 10 и 11 классов продуцированию интегрированных письменных заданий. В заключение делается вывод, что в школьной программе следует уделять больше внимания рассматриваемому формату

письменных заданий.

Ключевые слова: интегрированные письменные задания, интегрированные умения, аутентичность, мультимодальные источники информации, критическое мышление, медиация, медиативные умения.

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INTEGRATED WRITING TASKS AS A MEANS OF INCREASING THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE LEARNING PROCESS

The article discusses the specifics of integrated writing tasks and their didactic potential in teaching a foreign language. It presents a review of various approaches to the tasks under consideration, describes their typology depending on the proposed supports, and outlines a set of certain skills and abilities needed to successfully complete these tasks. Special attention is paid to the cognitive processes involved in completing integrated writing tasks. In particular, the authors dwell upon the problem of clip thinking, which accounts for the difficulties in processing a large amount of information and generating statements based on the data analyzed. The empirical part of the paper centers on the results of the experiment carried out among high school students and aimed at teaching integrated writing skills. A distinctive feature of the paper is the approach to the integrated writing tasks perceived through the prism of the concepts of “mediation” and “mediation skills”. The novelty of the work also lies in the fact that the integrated tasks are seen as a tool to intensify the authenticity of the learning process, which implies implementing the acquired knowledge, skills and abilities not only in the academic environment, but also in everyday practices. The overall results reveal that integrated writing skills need to be trained within the school curriculum on a more regular basis.

Keywords: integrated writing tasks, integrated skills, authenticity, multiple sources, critical thinking, mediation, mediation skills.

Introduction

Writing used to be perceived as a discrete skill to acquire, which resulted in tests, including writing-only task constructs. Nonetheless, in recent years integrated writing tasks have gained popularity and have been included in such high-stakes tests as TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language). Notably, many Russian academic contests in English followed this trend by integrating the assessment of writing skills with source materials to fall back on, such as reading or/and listening input. The rationale behind this tendency is attributable to the fact that in real life writing requires an individual to employ multiple sources. In other words, integrated writing tasks allow for the authenticity of tasks. Apart from authenticity issues, many scholars remark that integrated writing tasks 'improve the measurement of test-takers' writing abilities, create positive washback on teaching and learning' (Gebriel, 2009). Furthermore, as argued by some researchers, they serve as a contributory factor to increasing test fairness and supply learners with content to rely on while writing.

Since integrated writing practices embrace the combination of receptive and productive skills, it is appropriate to resort to the word "competencies" instead of skills. In this connection, it is reasonable to refer to CEFR (Common European Framework of references), in which one can find an exhaustive description of competencies divided into communicative and general language competences. Within this paradigm, language users are perceived as social actors who interact with both others and the environment performing different tasks in accordance with the communicational setting. This reference tool also places a special emphasis on the concept of mediation, which can occur both within one language or can be cross-linguistic. This concept implies the ability to process and convey information emerging from different sources. For example, it may pertain to transforming non-linear texts (graphs, diagrams) into a linear text. Mediation features can be traced in integrated writing practices since one has to take notes while listening to the audio or video inputs before processing the ideas heard in the written form and /or has to articulate his or her opinion towards the source text. In other words, one should approach the source material with a fair amount of criticism and analysis. This, in its turn, raises the question of critical thinking development being central to the

learning process and teaching integrated writing in particular.

Literature review

Scholars and researches employ a variety of terms to refer to integrated writing tasks: 1) reading-to-write tasks, 2) listening-to-write tasks, 3) writing from source materials, 4) source dependent writing tasks, 5) integrated writing tasks based on listening / reading, 6) writing in response to audio or print source materials, 7) reading-writing and listening-writing tasks etc. As is obvious from the terms listed above, a variety of tasks falls under the umbrella of integrated activities. Thus, a line of research is devoted to the analyses of different types of integrated writing that are mainly restricted to the source dependent tasks based on the reading input and those that rely upon audio input (Alderson, 2009; Plakans, 2012). For some scholars writing based on non-linear texts also pertains to integrated tasks (Yang, 2012).

Various views on the writing construct raise the question of defining what integrated writing tasks represent. In this connection, it should be noted that there is a lack of precise and comprehensive definition (Knoch & Sitajalabhorn, 2013). According to Ascención Delaney (2008), integrated writing tasks can be described as 'instructional tasks that combine reading and writing for various educational purposes' (Ascención Delaney, 2008). Plakans approached these tasks from a broader angle through incorporating listening skills. So, integrated writing pertains to the tasks which 'elicit writing performance that involve other abilities such as reading or listening' (Plakans, 2010). Finally, one of the most exhaustive definitions was suggested by Cumming (2013) who sees integrated writing tasks as those that would have students 'produce written compositions that display appropriate and meaningful uses of and orientations to source evidence, both conceptually (in terms of apprehending, synthesizing, and presenting source ideas) and textually (in terms of stylistic conventions for presenting, citing, and acknowledging sources)' (Cumming et al., 2013). In other words, integrated writing activities require students to properly comprehend and process ideas expressed in the source and articulate these ideas in the written form referring to the source appropriately without appropriating the thoughts that belong to someone else. Therefore, integrated writing tasks represent a complex cognitive and analytical process.

The type of the integrated writing task is based on the construct

underlying it. In this regard, most scholars flag that source dependent writing tasks should possess certain features to be considered integrated. Namely, this type of task needs to meet the following requirements: 1) it should contain a substantial proportion of language to ensure the integration of skills while completing the task; 2) the language of the stimulus should be adequately transformed (Gebriel, 2010). To this end, some researchers note that the above-mentioned writing task based on graphs cannot be regarded as integrated since the source material is not rich in language with learners solely relying upon their language repertoire but not employing integrated skills.

Knoch and Sitajalabhorn posit that another feature critical to integrated writing tasks lies in the fact that the rating scale should be reflective of the task construct (Knoch & Sitajalabhorn, 2013). In other words, the assessment criteria need to properly measure a set of skills required to complete the task.

Another line of research focuses on the cognitive processes employed during integrated writing tasks completion (Ohta, 2018). On the whole, studies revealed that source materials exert a multifunctional role through being a means of 1) searching and selecting ideas from the input texts; 2) synthesizing ideas; 3) altering the input language to be used in the written text; 4) deciding on a particular organizational structure; 5) merging ideas of the input text with one's own.

Other research works address the task characteristics influencing task complexity and consequently performance on writing assignments (Cho et al., 2013). These variables may pertain to the topic of the input material, its length, the type of task based on the source material, the mode of presentation of the source material, etc. Some studies focus specifically on the influence of source material characteristics on summarization effectiveness (Homayounzadeh, et al., 2019). Namely, it is said that writers with lower proficiency levels often resort to patchwriting (copying the information from the input) whereas their more proficient cohorts employ the techniques of paraphrasing the ideas of the source material.

Some studies look into the extent to which borrowing from the source material occurs (Weigle, 2004). It is noted that the conventions of referring to the source material play a pivotal part in academic writing and therefore can display the level of writing ability.

Another research agenda, which requires further foregrounding as

remarked by Plakans (2010), pertains to drawing a comparison between independent and integrated writing tasks in terms of the final written products. Referring to other researchers Plakans contends that the two types of writing tasks coincide in terms of final scores. However, the points that are proven to differ across the tasks refer to certain characteristics of writing, including grammatical accuracy, development and rhetorical structure (Plakans, 2010). This research echoes the study conducted by Cumming et al. (2005) who explored the differences in written discourse provided by the examinees of TOEFL for independent and integrated writing tasks. The results revealed that the discourse of the two tasks differs significantly in terms of 'lexical sophistication', 'syntactic complexity', 'argument structure', 'voice in source evidence' and 'message in source evidence' (Cumming et al. 2005). The study indicates that the examinees tend to write more extended and original texts while attending to independent writing tasks as compared to integrated tasks having students stick to the source input.

Another point to consider regarding integrated writing tasks pertains to task representation (comprehending the task demands) and approaches adopted while completing integrated and independent writing tasks (Plakans & Gebril, 2012). The study conducted by the above-mentioned researchers reveals that some learners interpret the two types of tasks differently whereas others approach the tasks in the same way. Elaborating on this observation, the scholars claim that those who adopted the same approach failed to employ integrated skills attending to source dependent tasks. It is also asserted that the process of reading and rereading the stimulus was time-consuming and added up to the task complexity. Furthermore, for those who are less experienced in academic writing requiring the skill of synthesizing, the input material proved to be of use in terms of idea generation. At the same time, for their more experienced cohorts who gained substantial experience in academic reading for writing, the source material stymied the process requiring them to comprehend the source and integrate the skills needed to complete the task. Plakans and Gebril conclude by arguing that integrated writing tasks should receive more attention in writing instruction and assessment, which presupposes that students should be coached in completing this type of tasks requiring synthesis while the assessors should consider that task representation may vary

due to the fact that the examinees did not approach the tasks as the ones that require the use of synthesizing.

Another body of research centers on the advantages and disadvantages of the integrated writing tasks (Cumming, 2013). As far as positive points are concerned, it is claimed that source dependent tasks are useful for 1) instruction and self-assessment purposes, 2) exposing learners to source responsible writing practices, 3) honing students' integrated skills through providing exposure to multiliteracies models. However, the challenges of these tasks are as follows: 1) the assessment of writing abilities tends to be confused with source material comprehension abilities; 2) assessment and diagnostic information are mixed up; 3) some genres are difficult to score; 4) at times it is difficult to demarcate the language of the source material from examinees' production (Cumming, 2013).

Overall, the evidence obtained from the review of the literature is ample that the majority of the studies look into one type of source dependent writing tasks – those that are based on the reading passage. Accordingly, what sets our study apart is the fact that it addresses integrated writings tasks based on audiovisual input. The tasks refer to writing a paragraph and a magazine article based on the video recording.

Materials and methods

The study was conducted based on the written part of Russian academic contests in English. The mixed-method research approach was implemented. The quantitative data were obtained from the experiment seeing the participation of 64 high school students in total. The qualitative data were gathered through the questionnaire containing four questions of open-ended and closed-ended types and the observations made during the lessons. Evaluation and analysis of the data allowed for the graphic representation of the information collected.

Procedure

The experiment involved 5 lessons delivered to 64 highschoolers (10th and 11th grades). Each of the lessons included certain stages: 1) the highschoolers were provided with PPT presentation looking into specific Olympiad integrated writing task in terms of its rhetoric structure, common grammar features, vocabulary repertoire, and style; 2) then they got acquainted with task rubrics and assessment criteria pertinent to the integrated writing task concerned; 3) during the next

stage the high schoolers were required to study sample written texts produced by the participants of academic competitions in order to better comprehend the requirements and what they are expected to produce while participating in various academic competitions; 4) then they had to complete certain preparatory tasks offered, which will be later described in detail; 5) upon completing the tasks, the students had to fill in a questionnaire containing a set of questions pertinent to the specific writing task. The lessons covered two types of integrated writing tasks specific to Russian Olympiads (“all-Russian academic Olympiad for school students”; “Vyshaya Proba”, and “Lomonosov”). The task types included producing a paragraph and a magazine article based on the audio or video recording.

Depending on the type of the integrated writing tasks students were supposed to complete certain preparatory activities. As far as the integrated task based on producing a paragraph after listening to an audio input is concerned, a set of preparatory activities was as follows. In task 1 the students were offered several phrases in which they had to underline the topic and controlling idea. In task 2 they were supposed to choose the most appropriate topic sentence based on certain criteria. According to the task rubric related to task 3, the high schoolers were supposed to transform too general topic sentences into more concrete ones. While completing task 4 they were required to elaborate a clear topic sentence for each of the topics offered. Task 5 would have students write out a topic sentence from the paragraphs offered that was unrelated to the central idea. In task 6 the students were requested to devise the topic sentences for the paragraphs offered.

The integrated writing task based on producing a magazine article after listening to an audio input was accompanied by the following activities of the preparatory type. In task 1 the students were required to analyze in terms of vocabulary, style, and grammar features some magazine article titles retrieved from the real papers produced by the participants of the academic contests. Task 2 would have students analyze the sample magazine articles written by the participants of the Olympiads. While completing task 3 the high schoolers were required to match the titles offered with the ones that were more appropriate for the magazine article style. According to the task rubric specific to task 4, the students were requested to elaborate the appropriate title for each of the texts offered. In task 5 they had to match the titles with the

rhetoric techniques employed. Another part of the preparatory tasks focused on the vocabulary features characteristic of the magazine article style. One of the tasks would have students replace the underlined phrases with an appropriate idiom from the box. Preparatory tasks focused on the stylistic features of the magazine article. While completing the activities the students were supposed to edit the texts offered to make them more appropriate for the rhetoric structure of the magazine article.

As far as the paragraph is concerned, the high schoolers were supposed to answer the following questions:

1. Have you been taught producing a paragraph based on the audio or video recording as one of the examples of integrated writing tasks within the school curriculum?
2. How difficult do you think it is to produce a paragraph based on the audio or video recording?
3. Do you wish to continue mastering your integrated writing skills within the school curriculum?

The questionnaire that concerned producing a magazine article based on the video recording comprised similar questions, which were slightly reformulated according to the task.

Results

The results obtained are based on the data gathered through the questionnaire. As far as paragraph writing based on the video recording is concerned, the data obtained demonstrate that the majority of high school students (57 %) were familiar with this type of activity. 27 % of the respondents had heard of the task but had never been trained in it. 16 % of the students admitted to being unfamiliar with the integrated writing task. The answers to the 1st question listed above may lead to the following implications. Firstly, they may indicate that some students intend to study abroad and consequently are more exposed to foreign language since they have to take certain examinations in English. For example, the written part of IELTS (International English Language Testing System) is known to contain integrated tasks in which the examinees are required to produce an essay based on the written text and oral academic lecture. Secondly, the results revealed may also show that some students plan to major in foreign languages in their future careers and therefore seek to participate in academic contests in English.

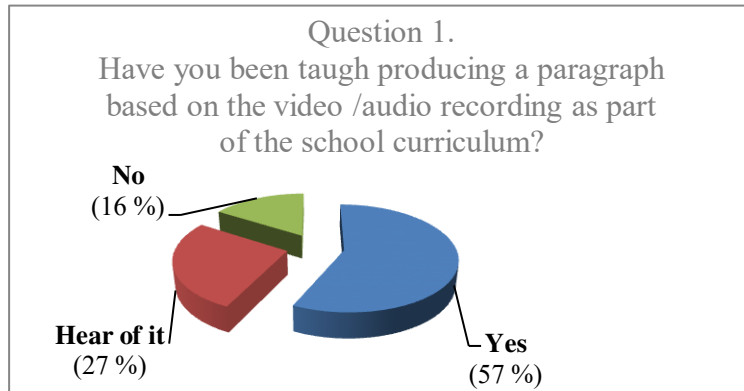


Figure 1. Data retrieved from respondents' answers to Question 1 of the questionnaire: 'Have you been taught producing a paragraph based on the video /audio recording as part of the school curriculum?'

While responding to the second question concerning integrated writing task complexity, the high schoolers were also divided. According to 80% of the respondents, the task pertained to relatively complex activities, with 15 % viewing it as difficult activity. Notably, only 5 % of the respondents regarded this task as a simple activity. It is apparent that the difficulties students may encounter while completing the task may be attributable to the fact that this activity involves a set of skills and subskills pertinent to listening skills, the ability to make notes while completing listening comprehension tasks, summarizing and analyzing while processing the information, and strategic competence implying, in this case, the ability to reconstruct certain information by means of probabilistic forecasting mechanism or contextual guess.

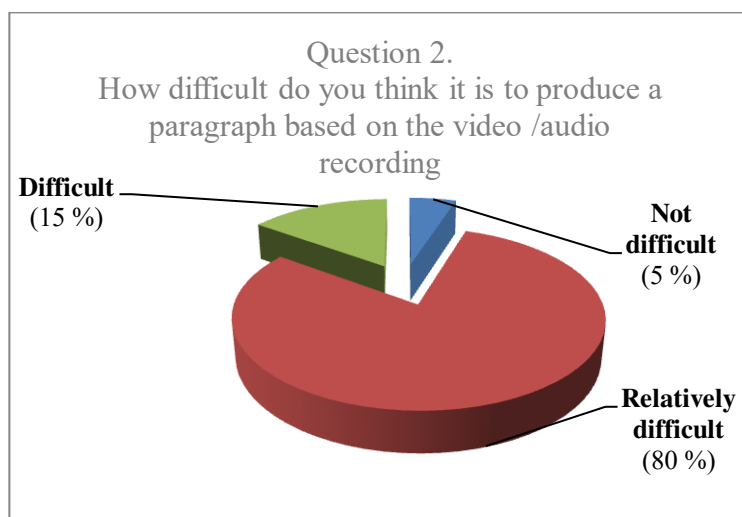


Figure 2. Data retrieved from respondents' answers to Question 2 of the questionnaire: 'How difficult do you think it is to produce a paragraph based on the video /audio recording?'

The answers to the third question indicate that most of the students (67 %) show interest in being trained in other types of integrated writing tasks with 4 % being reluctant to get acquainted with other activities of this type. Accordingly, 29 % of the respondents were dubious about obtaining further practice in the writing tasks under consideration. On the whole, the answers substantiate the fact that the high schoolers are enthusiastic about being exposed to integrated writing tasks. At the same time, if we are to compare the results obtained regarding the third question with the answers provided concerning the first question, it becomes apparent that it is students that intend to incorporate foreign languages in their future career path who are primarily interested in receiving additional training in other types of integrated writing activities.

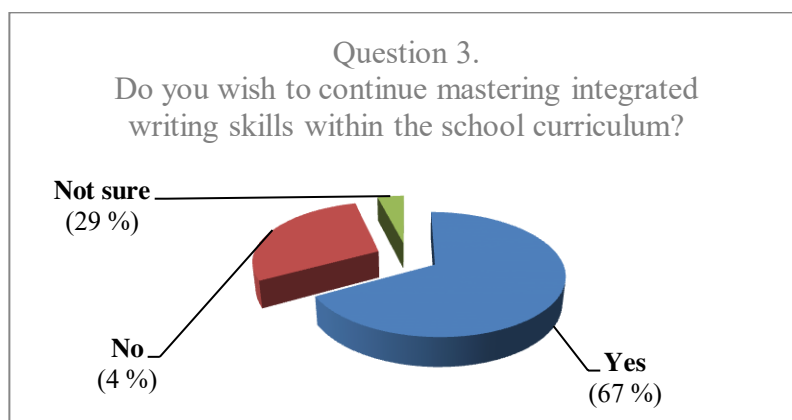


Figure 3. Data retrieved from respondents' answers to Question 3 of the questionnaire: 'Do you wish to continue mastering integrated writing skills within the school curriculum?'

Producing a magazine article based on the video recording represents another type of integrated writing activities specific to Russian Olympiads in English. The results found that only 19 % of the respondents were exposed to the task with 30 % of the students having heard of the activity for the first time. Accordingly, 51 % of the highschoolers had heard of this task but had never practised it. The results revealed may indicate that the magazine article as one of the written genres is not regularly trained within the school curriculum. Consequently, students do not obtain sufficient practice in this type of written texts, which is exclusively limited to preparatory courses for academic contests in English. This points to a considerable discrepancy between the school curriculum and requirements of the Olympiads.

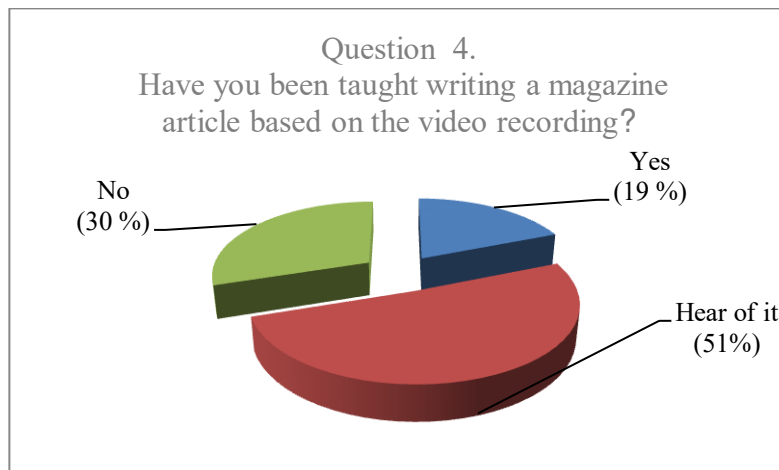


Figure 4. Data retrieved from respondents' answers to Question 1 of the questionnaire: 'Have you been taught writing a magazine article based on the video recording?'

The answers to the second question concerning the writing task complexity demonstrated that 78 % of the respondents regarded magazine article writing based on the video recording as relatively difficult with 22 % of the students viewing it as a complex activity. Remarkably, none of the students classified the task concerned as one of the simple activities.

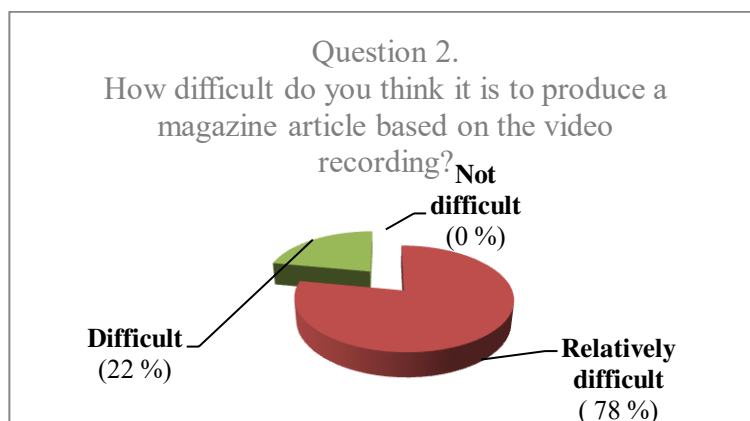


Figure 5. Data retrieved from respondents' answers to Question 5 of the questionnaire: 'How difficult do you think it is to produce a magazine article based on the video recording?'

As far as the overall students' attitude towards the tasks offered is concerned, a few remarks should be made. The interpretation of the data concerning producing a paragraph based on the audio input revealed that the high schoolers were mostly enthusiastic about the activities in which they had to 1) devise a clear topic sentence for the topics offered, 2) write out a sentence from each paragraph that was unrelated to the central idea, 3) write the topic sentence for the paragraphs offered. However, some of the activities presented certain challenges for the students. Namely, those activities referred to transforming too general topics into more concrete ones, choosing the topic sentence according to the criteria provided – too general topic sentence, too specific topic sentence, best topic sentence.

As far as the magazine article tasks are concerned, it was found that the students mostly preferred the activities in which they were supposed to analyze the magazine article titles in terms of style, and vocabulary, elaborate the appropriate title for the texts offered, match the titles with the ones that were more appropriate for the magazine article style and complete some vocabulary tasks. However, the students experienced certain difficulties while completing some editing activities aimed at transforming the texts offered to make them more appropriate for the rhetoric structure of the magazine article.

Discussion

Overall results retrieved from the answers to the questionnaire indicate that integrated writing activities should receive more attention as part of the school curriculum and therefore should not be limited to preparatory courses for the academic contests in English. Notably, some high schoolers remarked that integrated writing activities were not trained within the school curriculum regularly, which adds up to the relevance of the experiment conducted.

The findings obtained may lead to the following implications. There is a need for developing critical and creative thinking, although in general, the students did well in the majority of the activities they were exposed to. The fact that the highschoolers encountered certain difficulties while approaching the tasks in which they had to transform

the whole text, to synthesize the information expressed in too general topic sentences to make them more concrete, or to identify the most appropriate topic sentence indicates that they may lack some analytical and critical skills required to complete the activities listed above.

There may be proposed various solutions to aid critical and creative thinking development. First, the learning process should be problem-based, which presupposes that the tasks should be realistic, should correspond to students' interests, age group, and individual particularities. Secondly, the interdisciplinary approach should be implemented to ensure intersubject connections. In other words, a foreign language can serve as an efficient instrument of comprehensive development on condition that it integrates other subjects. Thirdly, teachers should consider some aspects that account for the mechanisms responsible for how information is processed and internalized. By this statement, we imply that the modern generation is notorious for clip thinking, which denotes the lack of ability to process extensive pieces of information. This means that teachers should consider it while organizing the learning process. They may resort to the technique of microlearning, which is gaining popularity. Microlearning stands for providing learning content dividing it into "pieces". In other words, learning material becomes short and specific so that it may be processed. Thus, once the content is processed and internalized, students can build upon it accumulating more and more information gradually. All the abovementioned can stimulate critical and creative thinking abilities, which are possible on condition that students possess substantial background knowledge.

As far as integrated writing practices are concerned, microlearning can also be of significant help. For instance, it can be implemented through a learning blog or any other platform which contains short video or audio recordings covering some issues. Therefore, students can be requested to comment upon the problems mentioned in the video or audio input. Furthermore, not only can they articulate their opinion in the written form but they can also read their peers' ideas and comment upon them. Thus, this leads to the exchange of opinions which occurs in more or less authentic conditions.

Conclusion

Integrated writing tasks represent a complex analytical process requiring writers to employ a variety of techniques and cognitive

operations during task completion. Namely, one should be adept at processing information from various source materials including audio and reading inputs, selecting, synthesizing and comparing, citing and paraphrasing information to avoid patchwriting. Thus, developing integrated writing skills plays a pivotal role in the current education paradigm reflecting the essentials of the competence-based approach in language teaching. According to this approach, learning should be practice-oriented, which presupposes that knowledge and skills students acquire should be applicable in real life. In other words, a set of skills specific to integrated writing is indispensable both in the realm of academia and everyday contexts. Given that, this type of writing task has come to the fore in various tests and academic contests aimed at measuring writing abilities. This, in its turn, provides a grounding for the speculations concerning the fact that there is an inevitable risk of confounding the assessment of writing competence with source material comprehension abilities. In our opinion, the inclusion of source dependent tasks in the writing construct is a reasonable decision for the learning process should be reflective and representative of real-life settings, as it has been mentioned so far.

Notably, stimulating integrated writing skills may exert a positive influence on a set of integrated skills employed in one's mother tongue. Therefore, providing exposure to integrated writing in a foreign language has the potential to prepare students for their future university life in which they are supposed to take lecture notes while listening to a professor. On the whole, source dependent writing tasks show the signs of the interdisciplinary approach, since the skills required are essential in a variety of academic settings that are not restricted solely to a foreign language.

Overall, integrated writing skills are proven to be critical to a variety of settings, both academic and non-academic ones, which makes it imperative for teachers to accord high priority to these activities involving a combination of receptive and productive subskills. Providing high school students with adequate training in the activities concerned can aid language development, multitasking, and analytical skills.

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**ПРЕПОДАВАНИЕ БРИТАНСКОГО И АМЕРИКАНСКОГО
ВАРИАНТОВ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА С УЧЁТОМ
ОСОБЕННОСТЕЙ БРИТАНСКОЙ И АМЕРИКАНСКОЙ
КУЛЬТУР**

В статье анализируется проблема, связанная с английским языком, который является международным языком, который учат большинство людей в мире для того, чтобы была возможность общаться с представителями разных культур по всему миру. Однако существует проблема преподавания английского языка с точки зрения британского английского и американского английского языка. Как правило, преподаватели в ВУЗах не обучают какому-либо определённому варианту английского языка, а смешанному английскому, который включает в себя черты британского и американского английского,