



**4th INTERNATIONAL
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**FULL TEXT BOOK
VOLUME II**

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**FULL TEXT BOOK
VOLUME II**

Edited by

**Dr. Mehmet Emin KALGI
Prof. Dr. Aleksandra KLICH**

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PRIMARY SOURCES IN HISTORY CLASS AS MEANS OF DEVELOPING STUDENTS' LANGUAGE SKILLS

Olena SHON

PhD., Associate professor, Department of English Philology and Methods of Teaching English, Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University, Ternopil, Ukraine

ABSTRACT

Multidisciplinary approach in teaching English language has gained much support in recent years. In Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University (Ukraine) the multidisciplinary curriculum includes a growing range of courses that students of the Foreign Languages Department study in English rather than in their native Ukrainian language. Therefore, the task is not only to give students the knowledge of the subject but develop the language skills through incorporating various methods and means.

One of the subjects where the cooperation and content integration is beneficial is History of the English-speaking countries. The task of a teacher is to find the material that can boost interest and stimulate discussion thus developing students' critical thinking as well as language skills. Primary sources such as historical documents, letters, diaries of public figures and private citizens are of particular importance. Not only they provide the basis for obtaining necessary information, they demonstrate the state of the English language at a definite period of time and its significant changes, give cultural insight and become the means of developing listening, reading, writing and speaking skills. Therefore, this paper aims to prove the efficiency of using primary sources in history class as means of developing students' language skills. The author discusses the ways of developing listening skills through work with audio and visual recordings such as public speeches and interviews, developing speaking skills through commenting, composing and acting out dialogues on the basis of analysed documents, games; developing reading and writing skills through paraphrasing, rewriting the historical document in Modern English, composing diary entries, text messages, creating social network posts for historical characters. Critical analysis of feedback provided in students' essays, group discussion and the results of the final assessment proved that using primary sources in such capacity was effective as students stated that they had the opportunity to connect knowledge acquisition from the documents of different epochs and mastering their language skills through suggested activities.

Keywords: Multidisciplinary Approach, language Learning, Language Skills, History, Primary Sources.

INTRODUCTION

Multidisciplinary approach in teaching English language has gained much support in recent years. In Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University, Ukraine, the multidisciplinary curriculum includes a growing range of courses that students of the Foreign Languages Department study in English rather than in their native Ukrainian language. This transition to subjects taught in English has several benefits, among them meeting students' expectations to master the language through immersion into the foreign language environment, to be able to have more subjects that focus on their professional development. What is more, this develops the important connection and study continuity, e.g. introduction of the course "History of Great Britain" taught in English to the first-year students provides the bridge to the related courses "History of the English Language", Literature of Britain", "Lexicology", "Text Interpretation". In addition, more optional courses are developed to support the said approach, among them the course "Historical Aspects of US Linguistic and Country Studies".

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The further discussion arises from the results of the research that was carried out in 2020-2021 academic year with the practical aim for the teacher to evaluate and discuss the first-year students' academic performance, progress and challenges while studying the course "Historical Aspects of US Linguistic and Country Studies". It is an optional course included in a bachelor's program "Secondary Education. (Language and Literature (English))". Students can choose it in the second semester of the program. The course hours (90 hours total) include lectures (20 class hours), seminars (20 class hours), and independent study (50 hours). The course examines the main events in the life of the American society, material and language culture, history, realia and traditions of the target foreign language country. The research methods are critical analysis of the literature, analysis of students' essays, observation, the course syllabus analysis and a group discussion on the course completion.

DISCUSSION

In the courses that deal with history of the English-speaking countries the cooperation and content integration is beneficial. Though the introduction of the courses the aim of which is not only to give students the knowledge of the subject but develop the language skills through incorporating various methods and means presents the considerable challenge to teachers and students. The task of a teacher is to find the material that can boost interest and stimulate discussion thus developing students' critical thinking as well as language skills. Primary sources such as historical documents, letters, diaries of public figures and private citizens are of particular importance.

According to the manual “Engaging Students with Primary Sources” published by the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, primary source is a first-hand, original account, record, or evidence about a person, place, object, or an event (ESPS:5). Primary sources include: texts such as manuscripts, letters, diaries, autobiographies, memoirs, journals, newspapers; audio recordings and video recordings; visual materials such as photographs, prints, advertisement cards; artefacts, e.g. clothing, costumes, furniture, objects of everyday use; research data, e.g. polls, charts and much more. As material evidence of the definite epoch primary sources can give first-hand account of a historic event, supply the data that is missing in a textbook and give students the opportunity to be analytical and think critically while examining the sources, connecting them to the topic they study, express their opinions and build up a perspective speaking about past and present and making prognosis for the future. Primary sources expose students to multiple perspectives on great issues of the past and present.

The educational potential of primary sources in history class or social studies has been widely discussed recently. The evidence is the big amount of sites for teachers that suggest various manuals, recommendations and worksheets as well as articles and manuals. The authors discuss ways and patterns of working with primary sources not only as sources of information. For example, Rebecca Newland discusses using several of them together stating that working with more than one primary source and seeing how they work together provides insight into perspectives from those that created the sources and, if in contrast with each other, highlight each one by putting them side by side (Bober, 2019). Also she sees primary sources as basis of asking strong research questions explaining that this will help students to brainstorm possible resources before they begin researching, which, in its turn, will give them the opportunity to highlight available resources and guide students towards relying on credible sources that are available to them (Bober, 2019). Scott M. Waring and Richard Hartshorne point out that engaging students with primary sources can help them to foster critical-thinking and deductive reasoning skills, make learning more appealing and allow teachers to personalize learning environments (Waring and Hartshorne, 2020:3).

Discussing the benefits of using primary sources Emily Paras, Briana Piche and Leah Nillas state that they can be grouped into two major themes: developing a critical and comprehensive understanding of history and creating a relevant and meaningful learning experience for students. In addition, the authors discover that using primary sources helps to build historical empathy in students, and students gain more than historical understanding by studying primary sources. The process of historical study, which involves critical thinking, critiquing, analyzing, and synthesizing, helps students develop these essential interdisciplinary skills (Paras et al., 2010). At the same time the researchers agree that primary sources can be misused if they are not properly guided or given adequate background information. In this case it is possible that students misinterpret sources, and irrelevant or inappropriate primary sources are used, they will be ineffectual (Paras et al., 2010). This opinion is supported by Michaela Goblirsch who states that with careful selection of sources

and proper lesson planning, primary sources can easily be incorporated into most lessons (Goblirsch, 2010).

The problem of selecting primary sources is of utmost importance. According to M. Goblirsch, primary sources should illuminate the content of a lesson, which in turn will improve students' understanding of concepts, thereby achieving national and state historical standards (Goblirsch, 2010). At the same time the developmental and educational levels of the students must also be taken into consideration. This is the problem discussed by Joan Musbach who warns against blind usage of primary sources and suggests five rules that teachers should keep to when they select the primary sources for students of different age and abilities (Musbach, 2001). Though we second the thought that teachers can use sources of varying difficulty and differentiate instructions so that students of all ability levels are involved and challenged like scaffolding students in group projects, allowing them to teach and learn from each other (Goblirsch, 2010).

At the same time one should be warned against simplified approach to primary sources. Simple reading and discussion of any historical text or describing a photo is not enough. In their book "Conducting Authentic Historical Inquiry: Engaging Learners with SOURCES and Emerging Technologies" Scott M. Waring and Richard Hartshorne develop the SOURCES Framework for Teaching with Primary and Secondary Sources through which the learning process is scaffolded to allow individual students opportunities to examine the sources, question their understanding of a historic event, develop background knowledge, find further evidence that support the understanding and construct their own narrative (Waring and Hartshorne, 2020:4). The SOURCES Framework for Teaching with Primary and Secondary Sources includes the following seven steps:

1. Scrutinizing the Fundamental Source(s).
2. Organizing Thoughts.
3. Understanding the Context.
4. Reading Between the Lines.
5. Corroborating and Refuting.
6. Establishing a Plausible Narrative.
7. Summarizing Final Thoughts (Waring and Hartshorne, 2020:4).

Making learning active is a critical component of education process, and modern teachers suggest various strategies to incorporate primary sources into the process of learning. Joe Sangillo develops five strategies for using primary sources in the social studies classroom (Sangillo: 2016) but we can apply them to the history class as well. These strategies are: using primary sources to corroborate secondary sources like recent articles, opinions, textbooks; brainstorming dialogues of historical figures based on primary sources analysis as this can help to generate multiple viewpoints to draw conclusions; move past the

main idea and focus on vocabulary and style, setting, emotions etc.; letting all people in history speak for themselves, not only famous historical figures, through their speeches, letters and diaries, which provides the context; combining multiple formats of primary sources (Sangillo: 2016). Larry Ferlazzo (Ferlazzo, 2021) suggests using SOAPSETone (Speaker, Occasion, Audience, Purpose, Subject, Evidence, and Tone) to teach students how to analyse individual primary sources and facilitate deeper reading and analytical thinking.

Thus, active learning, developing of critical thinking, analytical skills, comprehensive understanding of history are the main benefits of using primary sources in the history classroom. But using them in the class where students learn history of the English-speaking countries not in their native language but in English can become the powerful means of developing students' language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The course in history becomes the course where students not only get knowledge but master the foreign language they learn, and this connection proves to be beneficial to them. Primary sources are the means of developing the language skills (plus cultural awareness) in complex. Further examples refer to using primary sources in the optional course "Historical Aspects of US Linguistic and Country Studies".

Reading skills are probably the first language skills that are thought about when studying primary sources is considered. To understand a historical document of any kind students have to read it. A teacher can develop a set of questions for close reading that will help them to pay attention to significant details like places of action, time, surrounding, facts and people mentioned etc. Vocabulary exercises are also important when the text of the document under analysis is complicated or contains archaic language units. Explaining them, discussing their meaning, practising them in various exercises like finding synonyms, paraphrasing etc. helps to understand the language and style of the document better and observe how the English language changes with the time. The same can be applied to grammar and syntax of the document if complicated constructions are found there (e.g. the task to paraphrase the grievances against King George III in The United States Declaration of Independence). Some of these can be used to develop listening skills when students listen to the authentic recordings of public speeches, songs, watch documentaries of the period.

Reading and listening prepare students to discussion that is the means of developing speaking skills. This is where various forms of discussing content are of utmost importance. The teacher can suggest acting out dialogues and roleplays based on historical notes (e.g. notes of James Madison during the Constitutional Convention), composing and acting out dialogues on the basis of letters, diaries, historical paintings, organizing debates where sources involving different political opinions are involved, making interviews with historical characters etc. These tasks help students to go into the depth of the document under analysis, read between the lines, discover the meanings that are not obvious and see the problem from different perspectives.

Written assignments not only summarise the understanding of the source and the problem but give students opportunity to develop it through their creativity and usage of the foreign language in writing. The following tasks can be suggested: writing a diary entry, a letter, a newspaper article, a statement, a speech etc. To make a bridge between the past and present students can be given the tasks to write a Facebook (Instagram) post, a Tweet, a set of text messages, a chat, all from the point of view of a definite historical character, write captions to historical paintings, advertisements and others. These tasks help students to single out the most important information and render it in modern English thus developing their writing skills.

As the example of using a primary source as means of developing students' language skills let us consider the letter that George Washington wrote to his wife Martha informing her that he was appointed as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army. This letter is of a particular importance as it is one of the three surviving letters between George and Martha Washington, and the teacher should point out this fact to the students making them understand how valuable it is as the direct source of information that also speaks about feelings and emotions of the person who wrote it.

Below is the full text (transcript) of the letter (from the site of George Washington's Mount Vernon).

Philadelphia June 18, 1775

My Dearest

I am now set down to write you on a subject which fills me with inexpressible concern - and this concern is greatly aggravated and Increased, when I reflect upon the uneasiness I know it will give you - It has been determined in Congress that the whole Army raised for the defence of the American Cause shall be put under my care, and that it is necessary for me to proceed immediately to Boston to take upon me the command of it. You may believe me my dear Patcy, when I assure you, in the most solemn manner, that, so far from seeking this appointment I have used every endeavor in my power to avoid it, not only from my unwillingness to part with you and the Family, but from a consciousness of its being a trust too great for my Capacity and that I should enjoy more real happiness and felicity in one month with you, at home, than I have the most distant prospect of reaping abroad, if my stay were to be Seven times Seven years. But, as it has been a kind of destiny that has thrown me upon this Service, I shall hope that my undertaking of it, is designed to answer some good purpose - You might, and I suppose did perceive, from the Tenor of my letters, that I was apprehensive I could not avoid this appointment, as I did not even pretend [t]o intimate when I should return - that was the case - it was utterly out of my power to refuse this appointment without exposing my Character to such censures as would have reflected dishonour upon myself, and given pain to my friends - this, I am sure could not, and ought not be pleasing to you, & must have lessened me considerably in my own esteem. I shall rely therefore, confidently, on that Providence which has heretofore preservd, & been bountiful to me, not doubting but that I shall return

safe to you in the fall - I shall feel no pain from the Toil, or the danger of the Campaign - My unhappiness will flow, from the uneasiness I know you will feel at being left alone - I beg of you to summon your whole fortitude Resolution, and pass your time as agreeably as possible - nothing will give me so much sincere satisfaction as to hear this, and to hear it from your own pen.

If it should be your desire to remove to Alexandria (as you once mentioned upon an occasion of this sort) I am quite pleased that you should put it into practice, & Lund Washington may be directed, by you, to build a Kitchen and other Houses there proper for your reception - if on the other hand you should rather Incline to spend a good part of your time among your Friends below, I wish you to do so. - In short, my earnest, & ardent desire is, that you would pursue any Plan that is most likely to produce content, and a tolerable degree of Tranquility as it must add greatly to my uneasy feelings to hear that you are dissatisfied, and complaining at what I really could not avoid.

As life is always uncertain, and common prudence dictates to every Man the necessity of settling his temporal Concerns whilst it is in his power - and while the Mind is calm and undisturbed, I have, since I came to this place (for I had not time to do it before I left home) got Colo Pendleton to Draft a Will for me by the directions which I gave him which will I now Inclose - The Provision made for you, in cas[e] of my death will, I hope, be agreeable; I Included the money for which I sold my own land (to Doctr Mercer) in the Sum Given you, as also all other Debts. What I owe myself is very trifling - Cary's Debt excepted, and that would not have been much if the Bank stock had been applied without such difficulties as he made in the Transference.

I shall add nothing more at present as I have several Letters to write, but to desire you will remember me to Milly & all Friends, and to assure you that I am with the most unfeigned regard,

My dear

Patcy Yr Affecte

Go: Washington

P.S. Since writing the above I have receivd your Letter of the 15th and have got two suits of what I was told wa[s] the prettiest Muslin. I wish it may please you - it cost 50/ a suit that is 20/. a yard. (George Washington to Martha Washington, June 18, 1775).

When the students read the letter they get the questions for close reading with the task to prove their answers with the evidence from the letter.

1. In what words does George Washington tell Martha the news of his appointment?
2. Where does he have to go to take his command?

3. Does George Washington want the command?
4. How does he feel about his command and the tasks ahead?
5. What concerns does George Washington express about his and Martha's lives and well-being?
6. When does George Washington expect to return home?

These questions prepare students to discussion of the following:

1. What feelings and emotions does George Washington convey in the letter?
2. What is his opinion about the development of events?
3. What are George Washington's expectations and what are they grounded on?

After the discussion the students are given the task to make a dialogue, on the basis of the letter, between George Washington and his servant / one of his generals / John Adams (who promoted George Washington's appointment) / one of the delegated to the Continental Congress / a friend / a relative. Students can suggest their own variants for the dialogue, like a telephone conversation between George and Martha Washington.

The written assignments vary depending on the students' level of English. The easy one is the task to rewrite the letter in 10 sentences conveying its content. The following advanced tasks are suggested where students are to focus on the most important aspects (students can also brainstorm their own ideas).

1. As George Washington write a diary entry about your appointment and your feelings.
2. As Martha Washington write a diary entry about your husband's appointment and your feelings about it.
3. As Martha Washington write a letter to your husband expressing your concerns.
4. As Martha Washington write a letter to your friend / relative with the news of your husband's appointment
5. As George Washington write a Facebook / Instagram post, a blog entry about your appointment and your feelings about it.
6. As Martha Washington write a Facebook / Instagram post, a blog entry about your husband's appointment and your feelings about it.

After they completed the suggested activities the students were able to connect the knowledge they got from the letter with the facts they knew about the beginning of the War of Independence. In their feedback the students stated that it made them feel the events more personally and understand them not only as dates in history but as the events that influenced and changed lives of people in every aspect.

CONCLUSION

Studying primary sources in history class serves various purposes: it develops critical thinking and comprehensive understanding of history; creates meaningful learning experience for students; builds historical empathy; develops historical context. What is more, when the course in history is taught in the language that is foreign for students, using primary sources helps to develop students' language skills. Critical analysis of feedback provided in students' essays, group discussion and the results of the final assessment proved that using primary sources in such capacity was effective as students stated that they had the opportunity to connect knowledge acquisition from the documents of different epochs and mastering their language skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) through suggested activities.

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