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## Individual Styles of Summary Writing: Approaches to Styles Description and Diagnostics

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**Abstract.** The article represents the analysis of individual styles of summary writing with the aim to describe them, and verify the methods of their defining (diagnosis). The purpose of the paper is to determine the scientific status, and also to substantiate the pragmatic function of individual summary writing styles in order to improve the quality of students' preparation for this type of written activity in the process of learning foreign languages. The main goal of the authors is to prove that the individual style of summary writing is conditioned by socio-cultural and personal factors that influence the ability to perceive and process the source text and generate a secondary text – a summary. Materials and methods. As a methodological basis, the authors rely on the learner-centered and intercultural approaches to teaching. The solution of research problems was ensured through the use of a set of interrelated methods: theoretical (analysis of literature, of available domestic and foreign experience), general scientific (classification, differentiation, comparison, generalization), as well as empirical (experimental work, content analysis of activity products – summaries, statistical data processing). The material for research is summaries which are regarded as products of written speech by Russian-speaking and English-speaking students of an economics university. Results. The research identifies and characterizes lingvocognitive styles of summary writing specific for English and Russian language speakers, that reflect nationally and personally conditioned approaches to analytical and synthetic processing of information. We prove experimentally and statistically reliably the fact that Russian-speaking students are characterized by differentiating, scanning style of summary writing, while English-speaking students – by integrating, fragmenting style of summary writing. The systematization of the results of the summaries' content analysis has demonstrated the use by the learners of their personal experience for perception, processing of the source text and in the generation of the text of a summary. Conclusions. The obtained results help to optimize the process of preparing students for writing summaries in the conditions of intercultural communication, taking into account the individual style of summary writing.

**Keywords:** summary, summary writing, styles of summarizing, ability to summarize texts, lingvocognitive styles of writing, scanning style of summarizing, fragmenting style of summarizing.

Research area: pedagogy.

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## Introduction

Modern trends in teaching foreign languages, marked by special attention to the student's personality, to special manifestations of his individual characteristics, require a change in approaches to the development of various speech skills, including writing skills. Approaches to teaching writing as a type of speaking activity (Kashcheyeva, 2017), to studies of Writing-to-learn (Klein, Boscolo, 2016) vary widely in works of contemporary researchers, while the need for their updating does not cease to be relevant (Hyland, 2016).

For a long time writing was considered as a universal activity, the teaching of which should be similar for any student. Especially it concerned the cases when we taught standardized written genres – business letters, annotations, summaries, specific business documents. The latest scientific data based on the activation of the anthropocentric scientific paradigm proves the need to take into account in the teaching of written speech special factors associated with individually unique strategies of human communicative activity, with parameters of discourse completely dependent on the intentions of participants in written communication, the conditions of their interaction, the differences in their professional and social characteristics.

It is in this direction that the theory of teaching writing in a foreign language is developing, the main theoretical orientations of which are cognitive, social, socio-cognitive, genre, contrastive rhetoric, and critical theories (Riazi, Shi, Haggerty, 2018). It is proved that writing as a learning activity has broadened to include theories and research that integrate social and psychological processes (Klein, Boscolo, 2016). It is important to take into consideration contex-

tual factors in the process of teaching writing. Genre-based L2 writing approach allows investigating change in language learners' writing-specific motivational profiles – writing self-efficacy, capacity for writing self-regulation, writing anxiety (Han, Hiver, 2018). The specification of an audience influenced the summary writing produced by adult English as a second language writer (De Silva, Graham, 2015).

Currently, when teaching writing in a foreign language individual factors are taken into account. Based on experimental data, scientists identify the role of orientation toward written corrective feedback, writing motivation, and background information to achieve the quality of written speech. It has been proved that writing intelligence is dynamic and can grow through effort and experience (Waller, Papi, 2017), as well as under influence of cognitive and affective factors (Zabihi, 2017).

The approaches based on the factors of multilingualism and multiculturalism have particular significance in teaching of a foreign language writing. One of the directions is connected with the study of the role of translanguaging while L2 writing. Under these conditions, as stated by J. Gevers, students can be ill-equipped to engage in code-meshing if they lack the proficiency in established varieties of the target language. In addition, it is uncertain whether code-meshing could contribute to more positive self-perceptions among multilingual students, as some practitioner-scholars have suggested (Gevers, 2018).

Under the influence of these factors, many of the previously studied issues of teaching a foreign language writing begin to be explored under a new angle. Indicative in this sense is the question of teaching *summarizing foreign texts*.

## Theoretical Framework

The necessity of changes in this area is connected with the need in summarizing immense volumes of texts due to the expanding system of global distribution of scientific publications, their indexing in various bibliographic and reference databases (Scopus, Web of Science, РИНЦ (RINC)), as well as with an actively and dynamically developing tendency of computer aided summary writing (Moens, 2002).

The requirements to the students' ability to summarize written texts of different types are stated in the new edition of Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment<sup>1</sup>. The document reads that:

1. For level C2 a student can *summarize* information from different sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation of the overall result;

2. For level C2 a student can:

- *summarize* in writing (in Language B) long, complex texts (written in Language A), interpreting the content appropriately, provided that he/she can occasionally check the precise meaning of unusual, technical terms;

- *summarize* in writing a long and complex text (in Language A) (e. g. academic or political analysis article, novel extract, editorial, literary review, report, or extract from a scientific book) for a specific audience, respecting the style and register of the original;

- *summarize* in writing (in Language B) the main content of well-structured but propositionally complex spoken and written texts (in Language A) on subjects within his/her fields of professional, academic and personal interest.

3. For level B2 a student can:

- *summarize* in writing (in Language B) the main content of complex spoken and written texts (in Language A) on subjects related to his/her fields of interest and specialisation;

- *summarize* in writing (in Language B) the information and arguments contained in texts (in Language A) on subjects of general or personal interest.

4. For level B1 a student can *summarize* in writing (in Language B) the main points made in straightforward informational spoken and written texts (in Language A) on subjects that are of personal or current interest, provided spoken texts are delivered in clearly articulated standard speech.

These descriptors prove the importance of human activity in processing of a source text in a foreign language with a view to briefly transferring its content for various purposes: educational, scientific, professional. The significance of this is so great that the latest version of the European document gives summarizing very serious attention, fixing the corresponding skills for levels of language proficiency C2, C1, B2, and B1.

The written form of summarizing in the document is considered as a support, a necessary condition for oral summarizing with the purpose of generalization, summation of facts. The document states that the key word of the processing information scales in both the speaking and writing is 'summarizing'. Key concepts include (a) summarizing main points in a source text; (b) collating such information and arguments from different sources; (c) recognizing and clarifying to the recipient of the intended audience, the purpose and the viewpoint of the original. The leading role of summarizing is realized in, for example, the formulation of descriptors for the skills of mastering a foreign language, such as:

- can frame a discussion to decide a course of action with a partner or group, reporting on what others have said, *summarizing*, elaborating and weighing up several points of view (level C1);

- can *summarize* and give his or her opinion about a short story, article, talk, discussion interview, or documentary and answer further questions of detail (level B1);

- can *summarize* and evaluate the main points of discussion on matters within his/her academic or professional competence; can

<sup>1</sup> *Common European framework of reference for languages: learning, teaching, assessment* (2017). Companion volume with new descriptors. Provisional edition, Council of Europe. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989>

*summarize* the point reached at a particular stage in a discussion and propose the next steps (level B2)<sup>2</sup>.

The foregoing allows us to conclude that summarizing is one of the leading skills of a modern person, required in various spheres of life. From the level of this skill depends the success in study, science, professional activity. In addition, the more information a person gets through various channels (visual, auditory), the more abundant and diverse this information is, the more the skills of summarizing are in demand.

There is, therefore, the problem of improving the quality of students' ability to summarizing – processing a large amount of information and transferring the received data in a secondary text format – a brief summary of the basic facts for various human needs. This problem is caused by the need to take into account the factor of the individualized approach to teaching summary writing, the approach that takes into account individual styles of processing the source text and presenting information in the form of a summary.

*Summarizing* is one of the types of winding down of textual information. It can be regarded as a certain type of activity aimed at designing of relatively independent secondary documents that do not require addressing to the source text and represents a specific approach to compression of a text/textual information. This is an intellectual creative process, including comprehension, analytical and synthetic processing of information and the creation of a new document – a *summary* of a specific type. Classically, summarizing is considered as a text centered activity: this is the secondary text that serves as an object, with its characteristics, methods of its creation by means of linguistic and information compression.

Recently teaching summarizing as a research problem has attracted significant attention of researchers. They study:

- genre-based approach to teaching summary writing (Chen, Su, 2012),

- changes in foreign language writers' choices of meaning-making in summary writing (Wrigley, 2017),

- the influence of summary writing on the development of different skills in a foreign language (Marzec-Stawiarska, 2016),

- applying 'textlinguistics' to teaching students to summarize (Sherrard, 1989),

- examination of summary writing performance (Jiuliang, 2014),

- specific features of audience in terms of influence on summary writing produced by adult second language writers (Cho, Choi, 2018),

- analysis of summaries as a learning strategy (Kogilavani, Kanimozhiselvi, Malliga, 2015; Leopold, Sumfleth, Leutner, 2013),

- effect of source text 'summarizability' on summary writing (Guoxing, 2009).

We propose a brief analysis of the publications of recent years, devoted to both summary writing and teaching summarizing in various educational conditions. This analysis demonstrates the main vectors for finding ways to update the teaching process of summary writing, strategies for improving the level of knowledge and skills that ensure the achievement of a high level of proficiency in summarizing text in a foreign language.

A special attention in this area is devoted to the study of the style of summary writing by generalized (collective) portrait of an author. It is investigated which propositions of the original news text are replicated, in summaries written by competent readers, with a view to observing the strategies they use to write summaries for this text type and analyzing the linguistic devices involved when they implement the strategies (Yuan ke, Hoey, 2014). The authors distinguish three strategies, namely deletion, selection and abstraction, which are used by summary writers to boil down the original texts to their main points. Researchers draw attention to specific linguistic ways of conveying information in a secondary text and to how to teach students to analyze relationships between the propositions (Yuan ke, Hoey, 2014).

Close to those ideas is the work by S. V. Kogilavani, C. S. Kanimozhiselvi, S. Malliga, who also set the task of optimizing the process based on these features. The salience of the sentence is calculated and an initial sum-

<sup>2</sup> *Common European framework of reference for languages: learning, teaching, assessment* (2017). Companion volume with new descriptors. Provisional edition, Council of Europe. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/cefr-companion-volume-with-new-descriptors-2018/1680787989>

mary is generated from highly important sentences at different compression rates. As the authors point out, with the exponential growth of the Internet, many online news reports are produced on the web every day. The news flows so rapidly that no one has the time to look at every item of information. In this situation, a person would naturally prefer to read updated information at certain time intervals. Document technique is very helpful for individuals to acquire new information or knowledge by eliminating out-of-date or redundant information (Kogilavani, Kanimozhiselvi, Malliga, 2015). The article convincingly proves the very possibility of identifying the most relevant sentences from the text and putting them together to create a concise initial summary.

Recently, scientists are bothered with the problem of plagiarism. Incorrect borrowing from the source text and transferring them to the text-summary is a characteristic feature of scientific written works of recent times. The dependence on the Internet is leading to a strategy, which is termed 'de-plagiarism' (S. Wrigley), when students copy/paste text into their essays and then 'cleanse' the text to avoid plagiarism detection. The author argues that this is being done in the context of an increasingly 'de-authored' writing environment, manifested by lack of formative writing development and anonymous marking, rendering the student invisible in the writing process (Wrigley, 2017). The solution to this problem is through notions of dialogicality and addressivity (M. Bakhtin), which require the consideration of the author's peculiarities of the style of text creation.

Of particular interest are the papers describing the process of informational text writing. Informational text writing is a complex task requiring multiple literacy skills, such as reading and comprehending source material, identifying important information, and transforming ideas to meet the goals for the new writing task (Hebert et al., 2018). There are technologies for reducing the cognitive load associated with reading source text and teaching students to organize information using text structures.

The data obtained laid the foundation for the study of a summary and summary writing

from the point of view of the latest achievements of linguopersonology, in which the summary has become a means of describing the types of linguistic personality in the aspect of linguistic cognitive styles of reproduction. I.R. Prokudina understands summary as such a type of a reproduced text, which is an integral pattern of the original source and can find its different textual embodiment, depending on the peculiarity of the linguistic characteristics of its author (Prokudina, 2009). With this approach, a certain type of individuality characterizes summarizing. In the context of linguistic personification approach, which draws attention to the intellectual characteristics of a personality, manifested in the individual approaches to the transformation of a text, the summary acts as a personal text or 'personotext'. The study of the process and results of summarizing from the point of view of linguistic personification approach means the description of the types of the linguistic personality on the basis of the selection of individually specific methods of analytical and synthetic processing of information that are resulted in a secondary text. Thus, summarizing should be considered as a creative activity, expressed through implementation of individually specific derivational transformations in the process of compression and 'decompression' of information at different levels of language.

Moreover, a summary reflects a cultural identity of an author, his cultural peculiarity. In the process of pre-writing group discussions, individual request writing, and post-writing reflective essays the H. Feng, B. Du-Babcock study revealed the multiple layers of cultural identities that Chinese university students constructed. They were unable to resist or undo the cultural stereotypes that make them feel culturally inferior (Feng, Du-Babcock, 2016). Similar conclusions were made by Ying Liu, Qian Du in the process of studies of American students' perceptions of evidence use in Chinese *yilunwen* writing (Liu, Du, 2018). Canadian researchers point out the consideration of multi-/plurilingualism of students (Marshall, Marr, 2018).

Therefore, summarizing is a universal (standardized), but at the same time conditioned by the individual features of the author's linguistic personality, academic activity to create

various types of secondary written texts. The individual differences of learners in writing classes, as well as their learning trajectories, have become a subject of focused attention in recent foreign language teaching research on the learning of academic genres. It is interesting to analyze students' learning styles, which manifest themselves in the process of both perception of a primary text (while reading (Uhrig, 2015)) and at its presentation as a secondary text.

### Statement of the problem

The aim of the research is to determine the scientific status, and also to substantiate the pragmatic function of individual styles of summary writing for improving the quality of students' preparation for this type of writing activity in the conditions of teaching a foreign language. When conducting frequency comparison analysis of summary writing styles inherent in native speakers of the Russian and English languages, it is necessary to determine the degree of similarity and/or divergence of the linguistic ability of summarizing. Hypothetically, we assume that there are discrepancies in the ability to perceive, understand a source text (TEXT 1), its analytical-synthetic processing for the purpose of secondary presentation (reproduction/summarizing) (TEXT 2). Such discrepancies may be due to individually and nationally specific systems of perception and objectification of the surrounding reality by representatives of different cultures.

### Materials and methods

The material for the research is comprised of students' essays as products of natural written speech, i. e. such a written speech activity, which is characterized by spontaneity, unofficiality, and non-professionalism. As a method of investigation, the linguistic personological analysis of the reproduced texts has been used. The algorithm for reconstructing the linguistic cognitive styles of reproduction consists of decoding individual peculiarities that are manifested in the transformation and reproduction of TEXT 1. These features are determined by the specific perception, understanding, reproduction of this text, by the features of the analytical-synthetic information processing,

its interpretation, structuring, and evaluation, being realized in TEXT 2. The ability to understand TEXT 1 has been analyzed in light of the research technology methodology developed by M. Marzec-Stawiarska (Marzec-Stawiarska, 2016).

### Discussion

The diagnostics of summary writing styles is organized as follows. Russian and English-speaking students were placed in equal conditions for performing written activity in their native language. In the classroom within a limited period they were to write a monographic informative summary (similar theme and volume of about 700 words) of a popular scientific article in their native languages. The assignment was formulated rather generally: *Write a brief summary of the content of this article. Give a title.* The assignment was accompanied by the most explicit instruction that explained the significance of the text summarizing, specified who was the target reader of the summary (TEXT 2), described the portrait of the addressee – the reader of this text. This provided a high level of motivation for the students, their personal attitude to this activity, and triggered the available experience of summarizing. (For the role of the instruction in the process of teaching writing, see (De Silva, Graham, 2015; Wette, 2014).

The submitted summaries were evaluated according to the following parameters:

- the way of compression and reproduction of information;
- the degree of semantic adequacy;
- the way of representation;
- the degree of completeness of the represented information.

### Results

During 2017–2018 academic year, we conducted a validity check of communicative competence among students (78 students) of the National Research University Higher School of Economics (Moscow, Russia). 60 native speakers of Russian and 18 native English speakers participated in the experiment. The audience was homogeneous: young people aged 18 to 24 years, studying Economics (Specialization – World Economy).

As the result of the conducted research, it has become possible to reveal the manifestation of such linguistic cognitive styles of summarizing by English and Russian languages speakers, which reflect the methods of analytical and synthetic processing of information (Table 1) and the features of dialogicality and addressivity (Table 2).

The interpretation of the obtained results allowed drawing a number of important conclusions. The predominant use of an integrating style by English-speaking students means the reduction of the text due to the elimination of redundancy with economical speech tools. On the contrary, the differentiating style of Russian-speaking students implies a detailed

description, and, consequently, an increase in the number of speech units with a view to clarify and concretize certain concepts.

The dominance of the fragmentizing style in summaries in English seems to be curious; this shows the underdeveloped ability to restore a single, integral content of the source text after its perception. Russian students equally used both the scanning style of summarizing and the fragmentizing style.

Based on the data obtained, it has been clarified which type of a person is an average student of a Russian university, who is writing a summary of the text in Russian. This is a predominantly dependent type of a language personality, unable to independently generalize in-

Table 1. Comparison of the styles of summarizing between Russian and English language speaking students

Parameters	Styles	Russian language students	English language students
the way of compression and reproduction of information	copying	10 %	17 %
	contaminating	38 %	23 %
	generating	52 %	60 %
the degree of semantic adequacy	reproducing	71 %	37 %
	modifying	29 %	17 %
	reproducing-interpreting	0 %	17 %
	interpreting	0 %	29 %
the way of representation	differentiating	48 %	29 %
	integrating	52 %	71 %
the degree of completeness of the represented information	fragmentizing	43 %	77 %
	scanning	57 %	23 %

Table 2. The frequency of occurrence of summary writing styles, reflecting the features of dialogicality and addressivity

Parameters	Styles	Russian language students	English language students
interaction with readers	contact	21 %	15 %
	detached	79 %	85 %
presence/absence of emotivity	neutral	93 %	85 %
	emotional	7 %	15 %
attitude to the reproduction of someone's text	personal	0 %	0 %
	impersonal	100 %	100 %
attitude to the reproduction of the own text	confident	64 %	100 %
	unconfident	36 %	0 %

formation and transmit it using language tools other than the source text. The Russian linguistic personality can be referred to a differentiating type, predominantly choosing a strategy of detailing, highlighting facts because it is impossible for him/her to capture and/or understand the whole content of the source text.

If we speak about English-speaking language personality, performing summarizing of a text, then, in general, it can be attributed to an independent type. This is indicated by the predominance of generating and interpreting styles. This type of personality is able not only to independently construct hypothetical-deductive conclusions, to choose the necessary language tools, but also to perceive and understand the whole text, and also to go beyond it by means of interpretation. In addition, this person demonstrates the ability to memorize and

generalize, to operate with significant volumes of information.

## Conclusion

The analysis of the obtained results leads to the following conclusions. In the course of the experiment, it has been proved that the process of summarizing is influenced not only by individual cognitive styles of learners, but also by the national style of thinking. It is necessary to develop 'dialogicality' of students' cognitive consciousness, paying attention to their implementation of various cognitive strategies and types of lingvocognitive styles. The methodology of teaching summarizing built on this strategy will improve the quality of summary writing in both native and foreign languages. This activity is significantly needed by professionals in various spheres.

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## Индивидуальные стили реферирования: подходы к описанию и диагностике

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**Аннотация.** Статья посвящена проблеме исследования индивидуальных стилей реферативной деятельности человека с целью их описания, а также обоснования методов их выявления (диагностики). Цель статьи – определить научный статус, а также обосновать прагматическую функцию индивидуальных стилей реферирования для повышения качества подготовки студентов к данному виду письменной деятельности в условиях обучения иностранному языку. Основная установка авторов – доказать, что индивидуальный стиль реферирования обусловлен социокультурными и личностными факторами, влияющими на способность воспринимать и перерабатывать исходный текст и порождать вторичный текст – реферат. В качестве методологического основания авторы опираются на личностно-деятельностный и межкультурный подходы к обучению. Решение исследовательских задач обеспечивалось благодаря применению комплекса взаимосвязанных методов: теоретических (анализ литературы, обобщение имеющегося отечественного и зарубежного опыта), общенаучных (классификация, дифференциация, сравнение, сопоставление, обобщение), а также эмпирических (экспериментальная работа, контент-анализ продуктов деятельности – рефератов, статистическая обработка данных). Материалом для исследования служат рефераты как продукты естественной письменной речи русскоязычных и англоязычных студентов экономического вуза. В результате выявлены и охарактеризованы лингвокогнитивные стили реферирования носителей английского и русского языков, отражающие национально и личностно обусловленные способы аналитико-синтетической переработки информации. Экспериментально и статистически достоверно доказан факт проявления русскоязычными студентами дифференцирующего, сканирующего стиля реферирования, англоязычными – интегрирующего, фрагментирующего стиля реферирования. Систематизация итогов контент-анализа рефератов продемонстрировала использование студентами личностного опыта в восприятии, переработке исходного текста и в создании текста реферата. Полученные результаты способствуют оптимизации процесса подготовки студентов к письменной реферативной деятельности, осуществляемой в условиях межкультурной коммуникации, с учетом проявления индивидуального стиля реферирования.

**Ключевые слова:** реферат, реферирование, стиль реферирования, языковая личность, способность к реферированию текстов, лингвокогнитивные стили, сканирующий стиль реферирования, фрагментирующий стиль реферирования.

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