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ON USE OF REFERENCE TABLES AND SCHEMES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE COURSE

Abstract. *The paper addresses the possibilities of using various types of tables and schemes at foreign language classes in a military academy. It is shown that table and schematic representation of information helps to improve communication skills of cadets. The results of the study, demonstrating the ways of information representation preferred by cadets are given.*

Keywords: *communication skills, table, scheme, cluster, cadets, oral activity.*

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ОБ ИСПОЛЬЗОВАНИИ ОПОРНЫХ ТАБЛИЦ И СХЕМ ДЛЯ РАЗВИТИЯ КОММУНИКАТИВНЫХ НАВЫКОВ ПРИ ИЗУЧЕНИИ ИНОСТРАННОГО ЯЗЫКА

Аннотация. *В статье рассматриваются возможности использования различных типов таблиц, а также схем на занятиях по иностранному языку в военном вузе. Показано, что табличное и схематическое представление информации способствует совершенствованию речевых навыков обучающихся. Приведены результаты исследования предпочитаемых курсантами методов представления информации.*

Ключевые слова: *коммуникативные навыки, таблица, схема, кластер, курсанты, речевая деятельность.*

Modern education is aimed at providing students with communication skills, namely, the ability to speak a foreign language. However, many of them have difficulties in formulating their own phrases, both orally and in written form. It is no secret that for those without a systematic understanding of the language and a sufficient vocabulary it is easier to learn the original text by heart than to talk about it.

However, a written text is not the only way of presenting information. It can also be presented orally (listening task). As a rule, this is the most difficult task for cadets. Apart from videos, where audio message is supported by an easy-to-understand footage.

Another way of presenting material is through diagrams, tables or infographics. They usually contain basic information on the subject and key vocabulary to help formulate phrases. Using schemes maximizes the development of cadet's logical thinking, their memory and ability to analyze, compare, contrast, find connections. It is difficult to remember a great amount of information without organizing and systematizing it. Schemes solve this problem. One of the most important goals of a reference scheme is to facilitate the perception of new information. It is easily achieved via the interaction of image and verbal memory. [1].

Tables and schemes are handy for developing cadets' speaking and writing skills. By using them at foreign language classes we enable cadets to take an active part

in the learning process, encourage their personal development and creative thinking. Tables and schemes can be used at any stage of the lesson (introduction of the new material, practicing, revision, checking) and they are the best means of developing articulatory, lexical and grammatical aspects of speech. [2, c. 535]

Types of reference schemes and tables vary depending on the task and cadets' level of language knowledge. The simplest are substitution tables that allow making phrases by using one word from each column. For instance, to make a talk about different types of military aircraft cadets may use a substitution table with three columns. The first column includes types of aircraft (*fighters, bombers, helicopters, transport aircraft*). The second column lists verbs such as *are used to, are designed to, are equipped with, can.* In the last column we find word combination: *destroy ground targets, take off and land vertically, attack enemy aircraft, transport troops, rapid-fire cannons*. This way cadets get a complete phrase, and needn't add anything to it. They are only required to match parts correctly.

The second type is a table containing information from the text. Each column corresponds to a certain meaningful element of the text, for example, a table about weaponry may include the following columns: *Type of weapon, Characteristics, Application, Purpose, Structural parts*, etc. Each of them will contain keywords. However to make a phrase, cadets have to use appropriate verbs and additional words not included into the table.

Also information can be presented schematically. Schemes vary from diagrams for demonstrating statistic and numerical data to tree-like designs for topics including elements or subparagraphs that can be categorized. The level of refinement also varies. A popular type of schemes is a cluster, a graphic design of the meaningful elements of the text. It's basically a scheme; however its main element is not in the top, but in the middle of the design. While in a scheme levels and subcategories go strictly downward, in a cluster they spread in all directions. The further away from the core (centre), the more specific elements are given. Clusters can become the main technique of organizing new material. While making notes or drawing from memory we often

intuitively distribute information in particular ways, catalogue it. Clusters allow organize information graphically.

The relevance of clusters lies in the fact that the most important task of the modern education system is not just to provide cadets with specific knowledge and skills on certain university subjects. They develop the ability to analyze and process information independently and to extract necessary data. The algorithm for creating clusters is as follows:

− the keyword (core) is written;

− words that characterize it are written around it and connected with it by lines. They are the names of rather general categories that include more specific concepts also related to the keyword;

− all the concepts are written around each category. This is how associative chains are formed.

Consider an example of cluster made up to encourage cadets to talk about infantry fighting vehicles. Its structure will be as follows:

1. Keyword – *Infantry fighting vehicle.*

2. Categories that refer to its characteristics (*implementation, function, equipment, defensive abilities, advantages*).

3. Words related to each of the categories:

− *implementation: to carry infantry into battle, direct fire support;*

− *function: a weapon system, a means of transport;*

− *equipment: a rapid-fire auto cannon, a large conventional gun, an armoured hull;*

− *defensive abilities: (against) mines, improvised explosive devices;*

− *advantages*: high firepower, relatively cheap cost, easy maintenance [3, c. 357].

To determine what methods of presenting information are more convenient for the cadets and more efficient in preparation for the talk we conducted a survey. It showed that only 16% of participants memorize the whole texts. Most cadets extract

and memorize only main information (44%) or use support material (tables, clusters) (40%). In addition, 80% of the participants said that they prefer answering questions to retelling the text. Next the cadets were asked to evaluate different variants of information presentation (text, substitution table, table and cluster) and name their advantages and disadvantages. Thus, for 24 % of cadets the main advantage of the text is the presence of additional information. However, 64 % think that it is the main drawback. As for tables and clusters, their advantages are as follows: *easy to use to make a talk* (40%), easy to learn (32%), *brief* (16%). Among the drawbacks are *the lack of introductory phrases* (20%) and *absence of complete sentences* (24%).

Thus, we come to a conclusion that the use of reference materials such as tables and clusters allows for better organization of information and may help cadets to better prepare for the talk at foreign language classes. In addition, regular independent work can improve their skills of analyzing and processing information, maximizing the individualization and intensification of the process of developing the skills of all speech-related activities.

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