Развитие информационной и коммуникативной компетенции при помощи облаков слов

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Аннотация. В статье рассматривается использование облаков слов на уроках иностранного языка. Приведены примеры заданий для развития информационной и коммуникативной компетенций студентов. Составлена сравнительная таблица, иллюстрирующая особенности наиболее популярных сервисов для создания облаков слов.

Ключевые слова: высшее образование, иностранный язык, информационная компетенция, коммуникативная компетенция, облако слов.

Development of Information and Communicative Competences Using Word Clouds

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Annotation. The article considers how word clouds can be used in foreign language lessons. Examples of tasks for the development of students' information and communication competencies are provided. A comparative table illustrates the features of the most popular online services for generating word clouds.

Key words: higher education, foreign language, information competence, communicative competence, word cloud.

The quantity of new information is growing rapidly day by day so the ability to work with it becomes crucial in our society. Students have to analyze information and communicate their ideas not only in their mother tongue but also in a foreign language.

Trishina defines communicative competence as an integrative quality of a person, the result of the processes of selection, processing, transformation and generation of information into a special type of subject-specific knowledge [1]. One of the means that can be used to develop students' information and communicative competencies are word clouds.

Word cloud is a type of infographic [2] that displays words extracted from a text in random order. The more frequently the word appears, the greater weight it is given and, therefore, the bigger it is. Apart from the size of letters, the importance of certain words can be highlighted by colour and/or font. The shape and layout of a word cloud can also be customized providing many opportunities for creativity and self-expression.

Even though word clouds were initially created for displaying hyperlinks on websites, nowadays they are widely used for various educational purposes and English teaching in particular.

The greatest advantage of word clouds is their universality and accessibility. Students do not need any specialized background knowledge to be able to create them.

Scholars suggest using word clouds for assessment [3], lexical meaning analysis [4], representation of sphere of concepts [5], as a way to diversify approach to teaching, highlight the most frequent words in a text, personalize learning opportunities, memorize and recall educational information, increase motivation for studying [6],

develop lexical skills, critical thinking, analytical abilities, ability to distinguish most important information, creativity [7], improve reading comprehension, compare stylistic features of speeches [8], generalization and compression of study materials, as visual materials for projects, brochures and presentations [9].

Word clouds can be used at any stage of a lesson. They are suitable for individual work, group work and self-study [7].

This paper provides some sample tasks that can be used for the development of information and communicative competencies:

1. Create a word cloud on a given topic. Tell your groupmates about the topic using the word cloud as a visual aid.

2. Read a text or an article. Write down key words. Create a word cloud automatically by uploading the text or the article to an online service. A) Compare your key words with the automatically generated words. Which are more accurate? B) Try increasing and decreasing the number of words in the word cloud. How many key words are ideal for the given text or the article? C) Try changing font, colours and the shape of the word cloud. How do these things affect perception?

3. In groups brainstorm ideas and represent them in a form of a word cloud.

4. Make up a story using all the words presented in a word cloud.

5. Look at the word cloud and guess the topic of the lesson.

6. Design and conduct a survey in which participants are required to give only one-word answers. Summarize the results in a word cloud. Present it to your groupmates.

7. Decipher a famous quote. Do you agree or disagree with it? Why?

Since the tasks are presented in general form, they can be incorporated into any language course of any educational program.

Word clouds can be either drawn on a piece of paper, in students' copybooks, on a board or created in e-format. Online services help generate word clouds quickly and easily allowing even students with less developed drawing skills to create attractive and memorable visualizations. The most popular are wordart.com, tagcrowd.com, edwordle.net, worditout.com, wordclouds.com. Table 1 shows features of each of the

mentioned above online services that are available for free and do not require registration.

<div align="right">Table 1</div>

Online services for creating word clouds

	wordart.com	tagcrowd.com	edwordle.net	worditout.com	wordclouds.com
Paste text	+	+	+	+	+
Import words from text	+	+	-	-	+
Import words from web	+	+	-	-	+
Remove common words	+	-	+	+	+
Remove numbers	+	-	+	+	-
Stemming/ Group similar words	+	+	+	-	-
CSV format	+	-	-	+	+
Repeat words	+	+	-	-	+
Phrases	+	-	-	+	+
Show frequencies	-	+	-	-	-
Colour	+	-	+	+	+
Font	+	-	+	+	+
Shape	+	-	-	-	+
Layout	+	-	+	+	+
Download	.png .jpeg words data in CSV	-	.png .PDF	-	.jpg .png .WebP .PDF .SVG .html

Print/Save as PDF	+	+	+	-	+

To sum up, word clouds are an effective tool that can be created both by teachers and students and adapted to any topic or level of proficiency in a foreign language. Numerous online services provide great opportunities for self-expression making the learning process more engaging and diverse. Last but not least, word clouds may become a starting point for text analysis and discussion thus helping develop students' information and digital competencies.

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