

Role of Supporting Schemes for Developing Speaking Skills of Non-Language Students

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ABSTRACT

The article focuses on the problem of teaching English for Specific Purposes for non-language students, particularly, assessing the role of supporting schemes at ESP classes for Physical Culture students. The goal of the research is to develop supporting schemes and to assess their role for training students' speaking skills. Supporting schemes are found to create conditions for practical application of the acquired material and are a stimulus to students' speech activity being supporting visuals for the development of speaking skills. Supporting schemes are determined to have a positive influence upon students' state. They increase the level of students' performance and decrease the level of high reactive anxiety.

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Introduction

Nowadays, special approach to the educational problems in Ukraine causes particular attention to teaching foreign languages at different stages of education. The importance of mastering foreign languages by professionals of various fields increases with the expansion of international contacts, close relations, joint projects and cooperation. Therefore, researchers and methodologists pay great attention to various aspects of teaching foreign languages at higher schools.

Teaching foreign languages at non-language higher schools is professionally oriented and aimed at enriching students' vocabulary with special and professional terminology, intensifying students' actions relating general language knowledge, applying their knowledge in oral and writing contacts of professional communication.

Literature Review

The principle of visuals occupies an important place in the theory of learning. This principle is characterized by such native methodologists, pedagogues and educators as Omelianenko V.L., Kuzminskyi A.I., Yahupov V.V., Fitsula M.M., Nikolaieva S.Y. and others. According to *Kuzminskyi A.I. and Omelianenko V.L.*, the principle of visuals comes out, on the one hand, the regularities of learning process, the initial component of which is contemplation, and, on the other hand, in the process of cognition, a person uses the first signal system. The use of visuals in learning process promotes the combination of the concrete with the abstract, the rational with irrational, theory with practice (Kuzminsky A.I., Omelianenko V.L., 2006).

Characterizing the principle of visuals, *V.V. Yahupov* considers it to be derived from the principle of accessibility: the richer the visual aids are, the more accessible the explanation is. The principle is based on the leading role of visual analyzers in the perception of the outside world. *V.V. Yahupov* distinguishes the following functions of visuals:

- promoting students' intellectual development;
- helping to find the connection between scientific knowledge and vital functions, between theory and practice;
- facilitating students' educational and cognitive activity, promoting their interest in professional knowledge;
- helping to perceive a learning subject in its variety;
- promoting the formation of motivation to the cognition of environment.

According to *V.V. Yahupov*, the principle of visuals can be defined as a set of norms arising from the rules of education process and relating the cognition of reality based on observations, thinking and practice on the way from the concrete to the abstract, and vice versa (*Yahupov V.V.*, 2002).

M.M. Fitsula stresses that the use of visuals depends upon the creative potential of a teacher. However, there are some important requirements to be followed:

- not to overload the education process with visuals; it can decrease students' independence and activity;
- to have clear purpose of using visual aids in the lesson structure;
- not to represent all the visual aids beforehand; it can disorganize students and dissipate their attention; students must focus on a necessary object at the definite moment;
- a visual object should not contain anything superfluous, not to cause adverse associations of students.

Visual aids are not perceived simultaneously. In the first phase, the depicted objects are not clear and distinct. In the second phase, students' attention is concentrated on the object; their perception becomes more distinct but general. In the third phase, the perception of objects is differentiated. A teacher should combine visuals with explanation, since his word directs the perception of educational material reflected in visuals, helps to comprehend the observed material and to form the relations between facts and phenomena. A teacher should understand that, commenting visuals, he gives

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additional information about the observed object, its relations which are not perceived directly (Fitsula M.M., 2002).

Visuals have a specific importance for teaching foreign languages. This problem is investigated by many native and foreign methodologists, such as, Skliarenko N.K., Rogova V.G., Vereshchagina I.M., Nikolaieva S.Y., Haponova S.V., Shcherbak L.P., etc.

Rogova V.G. and Vereshchagina I.M. point out that students study foreign language in artificial conditions (otherwise than acquiring native language by children); therefore, visuals should be widely used in teaching foreign languages and should perform different functions on certain stages of acquiring learning material. Visuals may provide correct understanding of the material; it may be a support in understanding of the material presented in listening form; it may create conditions for practical application of the acquired material (Rogova G.V., Vereshchagina I.N., 2000).

Nikolaieva S.Y. stresses that *visuality principle* is provided with the creation of appropriate conditions for sensory perception of foreign language environment. The researcher considers that sight and audition visuals perform a function of foreign speech model and is a stimulus to students' speech activity (Nikolaieva S.Y., 2002).

The goal of the research is to develop supporting schemes and to assess their role for training students' speaking skills.

We hypothesize that supporting schemes increase the level of students' performance and decrease the high level of their reactive anxiety.

To achieve the goal set, we have used: 1) *theoretical methods*: the analysis of scientific and methodical literature to determine the state and development of the investigated problem; modeling and designing to develop methodical system and its educational and methodical implementation; 2) *empirical methods*: pedagogical experiment to test the efficiency of methodical system of using supporting schemes in the education process of Physical Culture students; 3) *statistical methods*: the methods of statistical analysis of pedagogical experiment data.

Materials and Methods

Organizing the research, we follow the assumption that developing speaking skills of Physical Culture students applying supporting schemes will be efficient if: 1) the role of visual aids and innovative methods of their implementation into the education process of English for Specific Purposes is determined; 2) a model has been developed, and the stages of using supporting schemes in developing students' speaking skills have been substantiated; 3) the methodical support of the research has been developed.

We define a support scheme as a table of lexical units at word-combination and phrase level to help students to construct their monologue speaking at the stage of the prepared speaking as a step to the unprepared one.

Results and Discussion

The scheme relating to the topic "Gymnastics" may involve the following key terms, word-combinations and phrases: *remedial gymnastics, educational gymnastics, competitive gymnastics, to relieve physical discomfort, to restore function, to master sport skills, gymnastics competitions, floor exercise, pommel horse, vaulting horse, parallel bars, high bar, rings, asymmetric bars, balance beam, compulsory routine*, etc. A set of lessons concerning the topic "Gymnastics" includes several stages, namely: the introduction of new lexical material, the automation of students' action with new lexical material and the practical

application of the acquired knowledge. During all the stages, the students of experimental groups perform a system of exercises using the supporting scheme. At the last stage, the students use the scheme while speaking (dialogue and monologue speaking as to the topic "Gymnastics").

We have developed the similar supporting scheme for the topic "Track-and-Field" involving the following terms, terminological expressions, words and word-combinations: *the Queen of Sport, track events, field events, short-distance race, middle-distance race, long-distance race, marathon, relay race, hurdling, steeple chase, walking, high jump, long jump, triple jump, pole-vault, discuss throwing, hammer throwing, javelin throwing, shot-put*, etc.(See Fig.1). A set of lessons includes the similar kinds of language and speech activity as for the topic 'Gymnastics'.

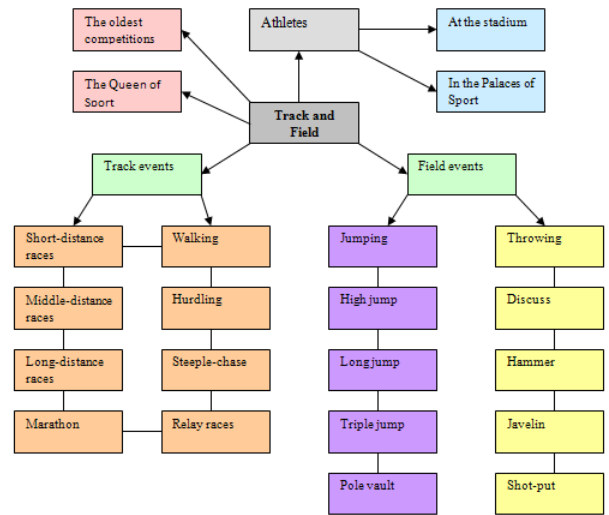


Fig 1. Supporting scheme on the topic "Track-and Field".

Two academic groups (4 subgroups) of students were tested (48 individuals). The performance indicator was determined according to the results of module control:

1. Performance results of module 1 control, topic 1 "UEFA Champions League" (without applying supporting schemes) (See table1):

Table 1

Performance	Number of students (individuals)	Number of students (%)
Excellent	12	25
Good	14	29.2
Satisfactory	16	33.3
Unsatisfactory	6	12.5

2. Performance results of module 2 control, topic 2 "Gymnastics" (applying supporting schemes) (See table2):

Table 2

Успішність	Кількість студентів (осіб)	Кількість студентів (%)
Excellent	12	25
Good	16	33.3
Satisfactory	20	41.7
Unsatisfactory	0	0

3. Performance results of module 3 control, topic 3 "Track and Field" (applying supporting schemes) (See table3):

Table 3

Успішність	Кількість студентів (осіб)	Кількість студентів (%)
Excellent	14	29.2
Good	17	35.4
Satisfactory	17	35.4
Unsatisfactory	0	0

The obtained results show that, after applying supporting schemes during Module 2, the number of students with “excellent” performance didn’t change if compared to Module 1. However, there were no students with “unsatisfactory” results; due to this fact, the number of students with “good” and “satisfactory” results increased. During Module 3 control (applying supporting schemes), the number of students with “excellent” performance increased by 4.2%, “good” performance – by 2.1%, and there are no students with “unsatisfactory” performance.

Thus, the obtained results confirm the positive role of supporting schemes for the students with “unsatisfactory” results (students with low level of basic language knowledge) and an opportunity to improve their performance for the students with “satisfactory” and “good” performance.

Supporting schemes create conditions for practical application of the acquired material and are a stimulus to students’ speech activity being supporting visuals for the development of speaking skills. Besides, we suppose that supporting schemes reduce the level of students’ anxiety while learning the new material relating English for Specific Purposes.

The reduction of the anxiety level is of paramount importance for the students of Physical Culture since they have different background of foreign language knowledge and skills and, sometimes, the formed stereotypes concerning the study of a foreign language are negative. The use of the supporting schemes as a tool of developing students’ speaking skills can break these stereotypes and create the supportive atmosphere in the class of studying a foreign language. Therefore, we are interested in the diagnostics of students’ psychic state, particularly, the self-assessment of anxiety level in a definite moment (reactive anxiety as a state) and personal anxiety (as sustainable human characteristics). This test is conducted by the method of “Self-Rating Scale by Ch.D. Spielberg and Y.L. Khanin, which determines three levels of reactive anxiety (low, medium and high). Reactive anxiety is characterized by worry, unease, and nervousness. We consider the experimental data according to the determined indicators to be of paramount importance since very high anxiety causes the disturbance of attention. Personal anxiety characterizes a stable tendency to perceive a large number of situations as danger, to respond to such situations with a state of anxiety (V.A. Melnikov, 1997, 87).

So, the same groups of students were tested according to the questionnaire to determine the level of their reactive anxiety. It is the state of a student which shows his worry, concern and emotional stress. If we consider different forms of control to be a stress situation, we can suppose that emotional stress can be reduced using supporting schemes during module control.

1. Test 1 results (module control 1, topic 1 “UEFA Champions League” (without the application of supporting schemes) (See table 1).

Table 1

Level of Anxiety	Number of students (individuals)	Number of students (%)
Low	5	10.4
Medium	19	39.6
High	24	50

2. Test 2 results (module control 2, topic 2 “Gymnastics” (applying supporting schemes) (See table 2).

Table 2

Level of Anxiety	Number of students (individuals)	Number of students (%)
Low	6	12.5
Medium	29	60.4
High	13	27

3. Test 3 results (module control 3, topic 3 “Track-and Field” (applying supporting schemes) (See table 3).

Table 3

Level of Anxiety	Number of students (individuals)	Number of students (%)
Low	5	12.5
Medium	31	64.6
High	12	25

The obtained results of module control 2 show that after the application of supporting schemes, the number of students with high anxiety level decreased (by 23%) if compared to module control 1. Due to this fact, the number of students with medium anxiety level increased (by 20.8%). There was insignificant growth of the number of students with low level of anxiety (by 2.1%). During module control 3, the number of students with high level of situational anxiety decreased by half if compared with module control 1. Due to this fact, the number of students with medium anxiety level increased (by 15%).

Thus, the decrease of high level of situational anxiety during module control 2 and 3 can show greater confidence of students applying supporting schemes. The number of students with low level of their anxiety may show the lack of interest to the topic or learning English, in general.

Since personal anxiety is a sustainable human characteristic, the dynamics of anxiety level was not considered, the level of personal anxiety was only fixed. These data may be used with the aim of self-regulation.

Conclusions

Visuals have a specific importance for teaching foreign languages. Supporting schemes or tables as a type of visual aids play an important role in the development of students’ speaking skills.

The obtained results can show the positive role of supporting schemes for the students with “unsatisfactory” results (students with low level of basic language knowledge) and an opportunity to improve their performance for the students with “satisfactory” and “good” performance.

Supporting schemes create conditions for practical application of the acquired material and are a stimulus to students’ speech activity being supporting visuals for the development of speaking skills. Supporting schemes train students’ memory, concentrate their attention and reduce the level of their anxiety while learning the new material relating English for Specific Purposes. The decrease of high level of situational anxiety during module control 2 and 3 can show greater confidence of students applying supporting schemes.

The use of the supporting schemes as a tool of developing students' speaking skills can break negative stereotypes as to learning a foreign language and create the supportive atmosphere in the class of studying English for Specific Purposes. Thus, supporting schemes have a positive influence upon students' state.

The perspective of further development of the research is the study of supporting scheme impact upon the level of students' memory and attention as well as feelings, activity, mood and the state of nervous system.

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