

METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF USING THE SCAMPER TECHNIQUE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LESSONS

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the methodological aspects of using the SCAMPER technique in English language lessons. SCAMPER is a creative thinking technique designed to help students generate new ideas by modifying existing concepts, texts, or situations. Its name is derived from the initial letters of the components: Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Modify, Put to another use, Eliminate, and Reverse. The paper examines the application of SCAMPER to English language activities, specifically speaking, writing, reading, and vocabulary, as well as the stages of task organization and the technique's impact on creative thinking and language acquisition, drawing upon existing scientific research.

Keywords: SCAMPER, English language, creative thinking, communicative competence, speaking, writing, methodology, innovative education.

Introduction

One of the primary objectives of modern foreign language education is to develop students' independent and creative thinking skills alongside building their linguistic knowledge. Students learning English should not limit themselves to merely mastering pre-existing grammatical rules and vocabulary; they must be able to apply their knowledge in new situations, substantiate their ideas, and generate original communicative content. Consequently, employing methods that foster creative thinking during English lessons is a key methodological priority.

SCAMPER is one such technique. The acronym SCAMPER stands for seven creative thinking operations: Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Modify, Put to another use, Eliminate, and Reverse.[1] The essence of this technique lies not in creating an entirely new idea or object from scratch, but rather in generating novel solutions and ideas by modifying an existing one in various ways.

Main Body

The primary methodological feature of SCAMPER in English lessons is shifting the student from merely accepting ready-made answers to actively creating new content. In this process, the student modifies an existing text, story, situation, image,

or problem and expresses the resulting new version in English. Consequently, creative thinking and language practice occur within a single process.

The first component of SCAMPER is "Substitute," where the student replaces an existing element with another. In an English lesson, for instance, a task might involve replacing a character in a story: "What would happen if the main character were a teacher instead of a student?" By explaining their answer, the student utilizes English vocabulary and grammatical structures. This method is particularly effective for organizing post-reading speaking activities.

In the "Combine" component, a new idea is created by merging two or more concepts or ideas. For example, students might be given two professions and the task: "Combine these two professions and create a new profession." Students then explain the new profession's name, duties, and advantages in English. Thus, this component allows for the integration of vocabulary and speaking activities.

"Adapt" is based on adjusting an existing idea to fit a new context. For example, students are assigned the task of adapting a story they have read to modern circumstances: "How can you adapt this story to modern life?" In doing so, the student not only demonstrates an understanding of the text's content but also recreates the story within a new context.

The "Modify" component involves altering specific aspects of existing material. In a writing lesson, students might be assigned the task of changing a story's ending – for instance, "Modify the ending of the story and make it more interesting." The student creates a new ending and writes it in English. Thus, SCAMPER serves as a brainstorming tool for generating new content during the writing process.

"Put to another use" entails exploring possibilities for utilizing an existing object or idea for a different purpose. For example, a teacher might show students an ordinary object and ask, "What else can we use this object for?" Students develop various answers and explain them in English, creating an opportunity to use new vocabulary in context.

In the "Eliminate" component, a part of an existing text or situation is removed, and the student independently fills the gap. For instance, the ending of a story might be omitted, and students are asked to create their own. This method not only expands students' imaginations but also helps develop their writing and speaking skills.

"Reverse" is based on visualizing an existing situation or event in reverse. For example, a question such as "What would happen if students taught the teacher?" might be posed. The student changes the usual situation and describes the new situation in English.

The methodological potential of using SCAMPER in foreign language lessons has also been directly analyzed in the work of Uzbek researcher D. S. Istamova. The researcher examines the methods of applying the SCAMPER technique in foreign

language classes, the implementation process, its advantages, and certain limitations.[2] This indicates the existence of a methodological basis for adapting SCAMPER to English language lessons.

The effectiveness of SCAMPER in English language education has also been studied through experimental research. A study conducted by Abdurrahman and Mahmood involved 70 EFL students. Participants were divided into experimental and control groups, with the SCAMPER strategy employed in the experimental group. The results showed that students taught using SCAMPER demonstrated superior creative thinking indicators and English language performance compared to the control group.[3] This result demonstrates that SCAMPER can be utilized in English lessons as a tool to foster creative thinking while simultaneously stimulating the language acquisition process.

The potential of SCAMPER to develop written communication skills has also attracted the attention of researchers. A study conducted by Kim, Gray, and Lange examined brainstorming techniques—such as SCAMPER and mind mapping—for fostering creative writing in an English-as-a-foreign-language setting. The results demonstrated the importance of using strategies that enable students to generate ideas systematically during the creative writing process [4].

In this regard, when applying SCAMPER in English lessons, the key factor is not the technique itself, but its alignment with specific language objectives. If the primary goal of the lesson is to develop speaking skills, SCAMPER questions should encourage students to articulate and justify their opinions orally. In a writing lesson, SCAMPER questions should lead to the creation of a new text. Reading activities focus on reinterpreting the text's content, while vocabulary exercises emphasize using new words in unconventional contexts.

A SCAMPER-based English lesson can be methodologically structured as follows: introducing the topic → creating a problem scenario → selecting a SCAMPER component → asking guiding questions → developing ideas → expressing ideas in English → presentation → feedback and assessment. In this sequence, creative thinking and language practice are not separated.

It is not necessary to use all SCAMPER components in a single lesson. Teachers should select the appropriate components based on the lesson objectives and the students' language proficiency. For instance, it is advisable to use “Substitute”, “Modify”, and “Reverse” in reading and speaking lessons; “Adapt”, “Combine”, “Modify”, and “Eliminate” in writing lessons; and “Substitute”, “Combine”, and “Put to another use” in vocabulary exercises.

Conclusion

The SCAMPER technique can serve as an effective methodological tool in English language lessons to foster students' creative thinking and ensure their active

use of language material. Its seven components enable students to re-examine existing ideas, texts, or situations from various perspectives and create new communicative products.

Existing research confirms the practical potential of using SCAMPER in foreign language education. Specifically, while Istamova analyzed the methodological application of SCAMPER in foreign language classes, an experiment conducted by Abdurrahman and Mahmood involving 70 EFL students demonstrated the technique's positive impact on creative thinking and English language proficiency outcomes [2; 3]. Furthermore, the application of SCAMPER within the EFL writing process has also been examined in separate studies [4].

Thus, the key methodological requirement for using the SCAMPER technique in English lessons is to implement it not merely as a creative exercise, but as an educational technology – one that is directed toward a specific communicative goal, linked to language skills, and designed to result in the creation of a final product.

References

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