

Frame-Based Supports in Teaching Russian Language Case System: Visualization Frames, Algorithm Frames, Theme Frames

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Abstract-The article is dedicated to teaching the Russian language case system for foreign students using the frame-based approach. The authors of the article offer the following classification of frames: visualization frames (word clouds, mind maps), algorithm frames (rules), and generalization frames (themed frames).

Keywords-case system, Frame-based supports, foreign students, visualization, educational process

I. INTRODUCTION

The relevance of this research is determined by the need to use the frame approach to the formation of students' knowledge, abilities and skills while teaching the Russian language case system for the educational process intensification.

The scientific novelty of the research consists in application of the frame approach in teaching the Russian language case system, which facilitates formation of cognitive and communication skills for frame building at the stage of grammar material presentation and creation of self-texts based on themed case frames as the final stage (e.g.: "Free time" frame) from elementary Russian as a Foreign Language to the first certificate level.

II. METHODOLOGY

The problem of teaching grammar aspect for the foreign students and its role in the foreign language speech activity is still one of the most complicated and relevant issues at the current stage of aspect-related teaching during pre-university training. Many issues dedicated to studying the case category were covered in publications of Russian and foreign scholars, including the history of case origin and development and the case category functioning in teaching aids and learning guides for foreign students at different educational levels (Balykhina, 2007; Kostomarov and Mitrofanova, 1976; Khavronina and Shyrochenskaya, 1999; Ostapenko, 1983; Vagner, 2001; etc.).

In our opinion, within this approach it is rational to present the learned material as certain mental structures while the grammatical expression of a statement is built with regard to the cognitive process stages. Therefore grammar material is mastered more deliberately. We share

Y.A. Sitnov's point of view that "the content of education has to include a certain set of cognitive structures (frames), included into human knowledge base" [9]. The idea of applying frames in foreign language teaching was stated in works of I.I. Khaleeva (1989), A.N. Latysheva (2004), E.E. Sokolova (2007), S.E. Shikunova (2010), Y.A. Malinina (2013).

This article covers three ways of presenting frame-based knowledge in teaching the Russian language cases: visualization frame (word clouds, mind maps); algorithm frame; themed frames.

Visualization frame

The visual means are widely used in foreign language education in different fields of knowledge. Teachers facilitate the learning process by supporting their explanation with images, diagrams and graphs that allow the students to view the study objects as reduced or enlarged through an optical projector, magnet board or visual material. A cognitive frame is an example of material visualization. A cognitive frame is understood as a word (tag) cloud <https://wordart.com> that helps illustrate the theme, for instance, such as "My free time".



Figure 1 Illustrates an example of a cognitive frame.

According to the theory of gradually formed mental efforts, the following components are distinguished: repetition, stereotyping, frame structures, visualization, keywords, mentality, universality, frame forms, associations, analogies and generalizations [4].

In our opinion, the teacher can illustrate a certain theme with the mind map to form students' grammar and communicative skills, which is an excellent tool for

effective structuring of the necessary information while a) presenting a theme; b) building a monological utterance; c) testing students' knowledge.

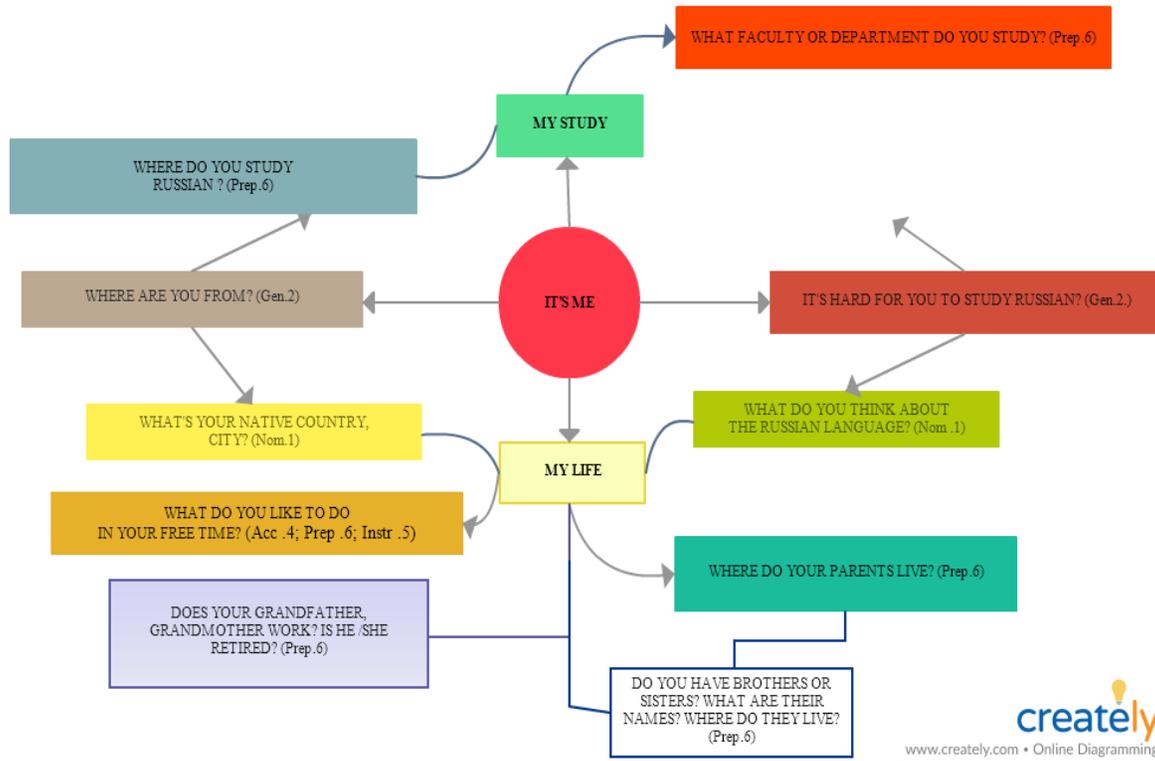


Figure 2 Shows a mental map for the topic “about myself”.

This mental map can help foreign students construct their own utterance based on the offered question structures that have been taught for specific cases (Where are you from? Genitive 2; Where do you study Russian? Prepositional 6, etc.). And also it can enable them to follow the logic of the content-related part of the studied topic: from the beginning (talking about oneself, where one lives and studies, what one studies, what are one's hobbies) to the end (information about where brothers, sisters, parents, and grandparents live and work). The teacher can extend, supplement, and add detail to the branches of the main mental map via additional images while preserving the structure of the material presentation and the overall meaning, which applies to the students' level of Russian proficiency.

Thus, the usage of frame-based supports allows acquiring the information in an integrated way and intensifying the processes of perception, comprehension, understanding and memorizing the information.

Algorithm frame

It is known that an algorithm is “the set of certain rules for solving tasks; a certain sequence of actions (steps) dedicated to the solving similar tasks. In the field of methodology, the algorithm is the instruction wherein every action of the student for solving the training task is

described. The algorithm-supported training is carried out by the teacher or by using a computer program” [1]. This refers to the learning algorithms, which are understood as a set of accurately formulated rules (operations) that determine a strict logical sequence, form and methods of transferring the teaching information from the teacher (or training software) to the student. The rule-instruction has its own algorithm: not less than two actions (“steps”), for example, usage of prepositions “в/на” [in/on] and “из/c [from/off] in Genitive and Prepositional cases.

The algorithm consists of step 1 where the speakers express their intention at the moment of speaking; and step 2 where they express own thoughts according to the set intentions in written or oral form. For instance, when the speaker is going to inform where he/she came from, we use the preposition “из” [from] if the noun is used with the preposition “в”[in] in the Prepositional case (“в городе - из города” [in the city – from the city]), and the preposition “с”[off] is used if the noun is used with the preposition “на” (“на улице - с улицы” [in the street – off the street]).

Themed frame

Themed frames help form particular scenarios that are associated with the activity, portraits and environment; they instill grammar knowledge in foreign students depending on their Russian language proficiency.

Using the frame technology at the lessons of Russian as a Foreign Language, we identified the following steps in working with the case system:

- Frame-case development with representative illustration involvement;
- Control of acquired knowledge in practical terms;
- Construction of students' own utterances in written or oral form.

At the first stage we create a frame according to a certain rule-algorithm. Afterwards students give examples, based on the algorithm frame only or the visualization frame while studying the case system at every lesson.

At the second stage we define the theme of utterance and offer helping questions, verbs for studying that are relevant for the topic; introduce students to the themed case frame.

At the third stage the acquired knowledge is tested with training exercises, for example: "build an utterance in written form, following the verbal graphic plan (graphs). The quality results of the studied and acquired knowledge can be seen in the students' test papers. The teacher can determine whether students are able to create algorithm frames or visualization frames, form textual unity or use the visual material for the control.

A fragment of the developed presentation of the grammar material using frames

To create a frame by the rule, the following basic steps should be singled out:

- to define case markers: helping questions that enable to build a written or oral utterance on a given topic: *where?* (Where do you spend your free time?); *what?* (What do you like to do?); *with whom?* (With whom did you get acquainted?) etc.;

- name the verbs which are used to make the topic c, define their different semantic roles if required (study – learn; listen – hear and so on);

- to build the general algorithm frame according to which sentences are made (observation rule; direction rule; definition rule);

- to create a verbal graphic plan (graph) of the utterance. Let us examine usage of cases as exemplified by "My free time" frame:

Elementary level

- 1) Verbs: like (do not like) (what?); listen to (what?); watch (what?); lounge (where?; with whom?); do (what?); get acquainted (with whom? where?); have dinner (where?); talk (where? with whom?) etc.

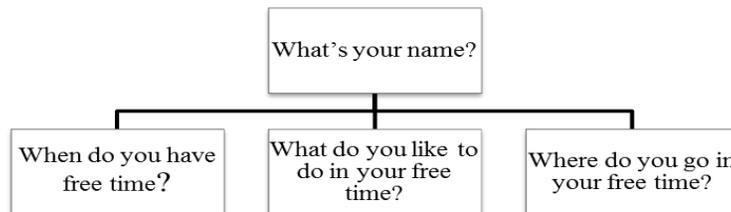
- 2) Verbal graphic diagram (graph 1).

Text 1. My name is Yiyuan. I have my free time on Saturday and Sunday. I like to listen to Chinese music and I don't like Russian rap music. I often lounge in the dormitory, watch movies on the Internet on Saturdays. I got acquainted with Anton in the university. I and Anton go shopping on Sundays and buy foods; sometimes we go to the cinema and watch movies there. We like to play sports in the gym. Then we have dinner together and talk to each other in the dormitory.

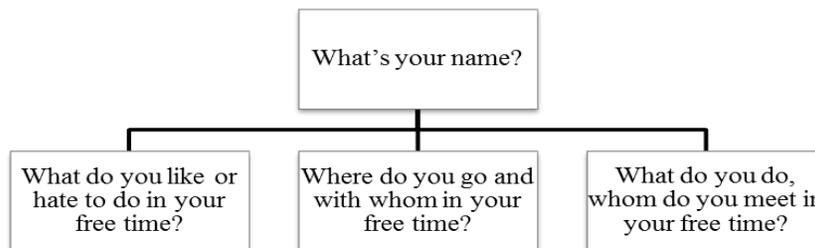
Basic level

- 1) Verbs: Like (hate) (what?); listen to (what?); walk-drive (where? with whom?); lounge (where? with whom?); read (what?); drink (what?); play (what?); do (what?); meet (who?); buy (what? where?); watch (what?); go (where?) etc.;

- 2) Verbal graphic diagram (graph 2).



Graph 1. "My Free Time". elementary level.

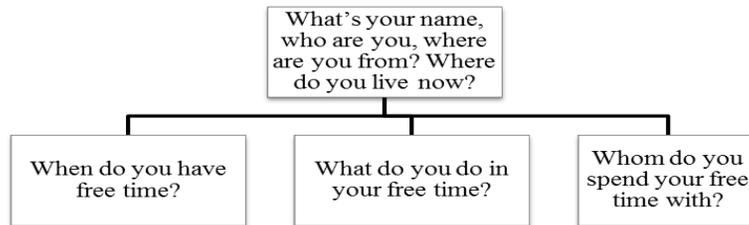


Graph 2. "My Free Time". basic level.

Text 2. My name is Liu. I lounge at home, read books and listen to the music in my free time. I usually watch movies in Chinese, because I understand little Russian. But sometimes I and my friend Anton go to the cinema to watch Russian cartoons. I hate horror films. On Saturdays I meet my friend Anton and we go shopping together to buy foods, and sometimes we go to the gym where we work on our fitness. Then we go to the dormitory, where we have tea, talk to each other or play computer games. I have little free time because I am a student and I have to study a lot.

First certificate level

- 1) Verbs: visit – be at (someone’s place, etc.); perform – have performed (at the concert, in the club, etc.); walk – take a walk (in the street, in the park, etc.); go – have gone (skiing, skating, sleighing, snowboarding, biking, etc.); have a rest – have had a rest (at home, in the countryside, etc.); spend (time) – have spent (time) on holiday, etc.; dance – have danced (in the studio, club, etc.); work out (in the gym, at the stadium, etc.).
- 2) Verbal graphic diagram (graph 3).



Graph 3. “My Free Time”. first certificate level.

Text 3. My name is Lin. I am a student of the preparatory course in the Siberian Federal University. I have been studying the Russian language at the university for more than nine months. I came from Shanghai, China. Now I live in Krasnoyarsk in the dormitory and as I already have said I study at the university. Of course, I don’t have much free time, because I have to study a lot to enter the university in summer. I want to be a doctor. Usually I visit my Russian friend’s place on Saturdays. Her name is Olga. She is also a student and sometimes she performs concerts at her university. If the weather is fine we walk in the street in the evening or, for example, go skiing in the forest in winter. I also like to lounge in my room when my neighbors are absent. I spend my time on holidays with my parents. I and my sister go to dance in the club or to work out in the gym.

III. RESULTS

While teaching the Russian language case system at the grammar lessons for the 1st group students, the teacher used graphic diagrams in the form of tables and textbook rules in the explanation/revision of grammar material. Table usage made 46%; rule usage amounted to 36% and mind map usage was 18%. Literacy rate of foreign students have not increased significantly in this group as a result of using traditional visual aids in studying grammar.

In the 2nd experimental group the following literacy rates were identified as a result of using frame-based supports, stating the increase in literacy of foreign students: teaching with the algorithms (rules) applied – by 26%; word clouds – by 20%; themed frames – by 27%; graphic diagrams (mind maps) –by 27% (Figure 4)

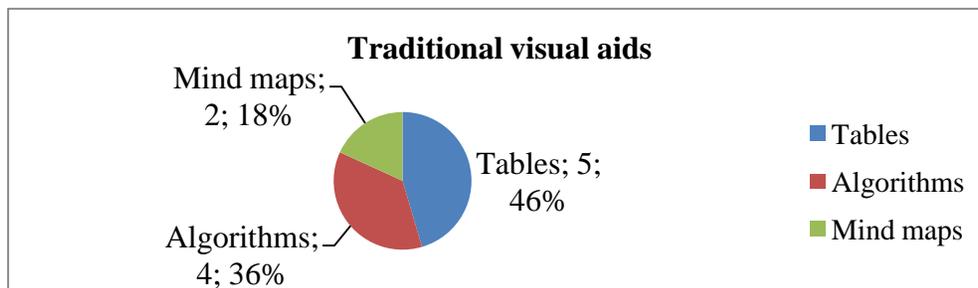


Figure 3. Literacy rates of foreign students in group 1.

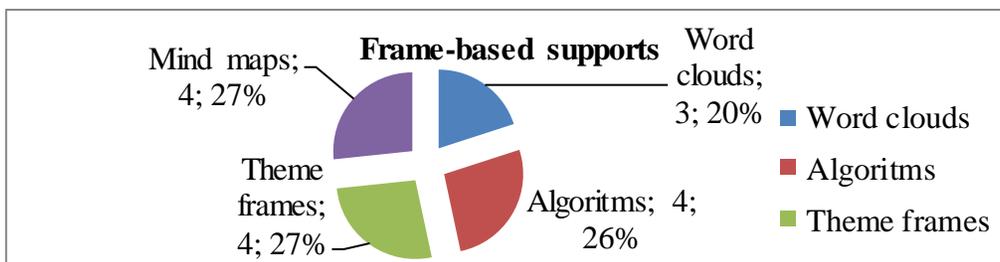


Figure 4. Literacy rates of foreign students in group 2.

The obtained results suggest the need to apply visual aids – frame-based supports – at the lessons of mastering the Russian language case system: at the stage of grammar topic presentation it is necessary to apply word clouds to expand the vocabulary and grammar of elementary level students; at the stage of material revision it is advisable to use algorithms (rules); at the stage of grammar skills formation it is recommended to apply the graphic form of material presentation (mind maps, themed frames), when students are able to show their greatest interest in own conclusions and to construct their own utterances on the basis of the presented grammar material.

IV. CONCLUSION

Thus, the authors assume that the frame-based technology in teaching the Russian language case system has a number of advantages as compared to the traditional way of grammar material presentation. Firstly, it helps determine the structure of grammar topic presentation at the lesson, point out essential links between its components: case, meaning, grammar form and functions (graphic method), when the verbal definition of a morphologic category is substituted by presentation of tables and diagrams. Secondly, this technology intensifies foreign students' mental activity through the synthesis, when students come to certain conclusions on their own during the Russian language case system study. Thirdly, the technology contributes to students' individual work in creating themed frames at the vocabulary study lessons.

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