BG Pulse Journal USA
ISSN:1947-2536 http://www.bgpulseusa.com/index.php/bg

"THE IMPACT OF SMART STRATEGY ON ENHANCING STRATEGIC COMPETENCE AMONG MILITARY CADETS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING"

Normatova Mukaddas Baxodirovna
Independent Researcher in CHDPU, Senior teacher,
Department of Languages, Institute of Ground Forces.
ORCID: 0009-0005-6217-7447

Abstract: The modernization of military education requires innovative instructional approaches that develop not only linguistic proficiency but also strategic competence among cadets. Strategic competence enables learners to overcome communication difficulties, make informed decisions, and effectively accomplish tasks in complex operational environments. This study investigates the effectiveness of SMART Strategy-Based Instruction in enhancing the strategic competence of military cadets. An experimental research design was employed involving 60 cadets enrolled in an English language course. The experimental group received instruction based on SMART principles (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound), while the control group followed traditional teaching methods. The findings demonstrate that SMART Strategy-Based Instruction significantly improved cadets' communication strategies, problem-solving abilities, self-regulation, and academic performance. The study concludes that integrating SMART strategies into military education can contribute to the development of competent and adaptive future officers.

Keywords: strategic competence, SMART strategy, military education, cadets, English language teaching, communication skills

Introduction

Contemporary military professionals are expected to operate in dynamic and unpredictable environments that require effective communication, critical thinking, and strategic decision-making. Consequently, military educational institutions face the challenge of preparing cadets who possess not only technical knowledge but also strategic competence. Strategic competence refers to an individual's ability to employ cognitive and communicative strategies to achieve specific goals and overcome obstacles encountered during communication or task performance. In foreign language education, strategic competence is considered a vital component of communicative competence. The SMART strategy framework, originally developed for goal-setting and performance management, has recently gained attention in educational contexts. By establishing Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound objectives, SMART strategies promote learner autonomy, motivation, and self-regulated learning. This study aims to examine the impact of SMART Strategy-Based Instruction on the development of strategic competence among military cadets studying English as a foreign language.

Methods

Research Design – An experimental design was employed to evaluate the effectiveness of SMART Strategy-Based Instruction.

Participants - The study involved 60 first- and second-year cadets enrolled in a military higher educational institution. Participants were divided into:

a) Experimental Group (n = 30)
b) Control Group (n = 30)

Procedure - The experiment was conducted over twelve weeks. The experimental group received instruction incorporating SMART-based learning objectives and strategic learning activities. Cadets were encouraged to:

a) Set specific communication goals;
b) Monitor their learning progress;
c) Apply communication repair strategies;
d) Reflect on achievements and challenges;
e) Complete tasks within established deadlines.

The control group studied according to conventional instructional practices without explicit SMART strategy integration.

Data Collection Instruments - The following instruments were utilized:

- Strategic Competence Assessment Test;
- Classroom Observation Checklist;
- Learner Self-Assessment Questionnaire;
- Academic Achievement Records.

Data Analysis - Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and comparative analysis of pre-test and post-test results.

Results

The findings revealed notable improvements in the experimental group's strategic competence compared with the control group.

Table 1. Strategic Competence Scores

Group	Pre-test	Post-test	Increase (%)
Experimental Group	63.4	84.7	33.6%
Control Group	62.8	70.5	12.3%

As shown in Table 1, the experimental group demonstrated a substantial improvement in strategic competence scores, increasing from 63.4 in the pre-test to 84.7 in the post-test. In contrast, the control group showed a more moderate increase from 62.8 to 70.5. The results indicate that SMART Strategy-Based Instruction had a positive effect on the development of strategic competence among military cadets. The experimental group demonstrated a 21.3-point increase, whereas the control group improved by only 7.7 points. Classroom observations indicated that cadets exposed to SMART strategies displayed greater confidence in communication, more frequent use of compensatory strategies, and improved task management skills. Self-assessment data further revealed enhanced learner autonomy and motivation. Participants reported that clearly defined goals enabled them to focus their efforts and monitor progress more effectively.

Discussion

The results support the hypothesis that SMART Strategy-Based Instruction positively influences the development of strategic competence among military cadets. Several factors may explain this outcome. First, SMART objectives provide learners with clear expectations and measurable outcomes, increasing engagement and accountability. Second, strategic planning encourages cadets to consciously select and evaluate learning strategies. Third, regular reflection activities strengthen metacognitive awareness, which is essential for strategic competence development. The findings align with previous studies emphasizing the importance of goal-oriented instruction in fostering self-regulated learning and communicative effectiveness. Within military

education, where decision-making and adaptability are critical, SMART strategies may serve as an effective pedagogical tool for preparing future officers.

Conclusion

The study demonstrated that SMART Strategy-Based Instruction significantly enhances the strategic competence of military cadets. Through structured goal-setting, continuous monitoring, and reflective learning practices, cadets develop stronger communication, problem-solving, and self-management skills.

Military educational institutions are therefore encouraged to integrate SMART-based methodologies into foreign language instruction and professional training programs. Future research may explore the long-term effects of SMART strategies across different military disciplines and educational settings.

References

1. Richards, J. C. (2022). Teaching English through Strategic Learning. Cambridge University Press.
2. Oxford, R. L. (2023). Teaching and Researching Language Learning Strategies. Routledge.
3. Nation, I.S.P. (2023). Teaching ESL/EFL Listening and Speaking. Routledge.
4. Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (2019). New Developments in Goal Setting and Task Performance. New York: Routledge.
5. Griffiths, C. (2022). Language Learner Strategies and Strategic Competence. System, 107, 102804.
6. Richards, J. C. (2015). Key Issues in Language Teaching. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
7. Zimmerman, B. J. (2021). Self-Regulated Learning and Academic Achievement. Educational Psychologist, 56(3), 143–158.