



DEVELOPING 'MISSION ENGLISH' TEXTBOOK AND WORKBOOK FOR CADETS AT THE ARMED FORCES ACADEMY

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Abstract:

This academic paper discusses the proposed development of a new textbook and workbook designed for cadets at the Armed Forces Academy of General M. R. Štefánik. These future educational materials aim to address the unique needs of cadets by integrating their roles as students, soldiers, and individuals. These educational materials will reflect cadets' everyday lives and challenges, preparing them for their military careers through a familiar and engaging approach.

The development process will involve close cooperation with School units, incorporating photographs and tasks from military program exercises. The resources will align with STANAG 6001 standards, including customized tests, to ensure high proficiency in English for joint military operations with NATO partners. Their versatility will allow them to be used in other English language courses offered by the Language Institute of the Slovak Armed Forces.

This comprehensive approach aims to bridge the gap between general English proficiency and specific military communication requirements, fostering both academic and professional growth for future military leaders.

Keywords: *English language, textbook, workbook, cadet, soldier, student, individual*

INTRODUCTION

As the sole military training and educational institution in the Slovak Republic, the Armed Forces Academy of General M. R. Štefánik holds a unique position and responsibility. In an increasingly globalized world, communicating in English has become a vital skill for military personnel. Recognizing this, the Academy should prioritize English language proficiency for its cadets. English is the 'lingua franca' in international military operations, NATO drills, and cooperative efforts in global security. To equip our cadets with these essential skills, we propose the development of a new textbook and workbook. These resources will not only enhance their English language proficiency but also prepare them for the unique challenges they will face in their military careers.

Cadets' current educational resources are somewhat insufficient to suit their unique needs. The specific terminology, context, and situations cadets may face in their careers are not completely and adequately covered in current educational textbooks and workbooks.

Therefore, a new textbook and workbook that addresses the unique military aspect of language and the professional needs of future military officers are desperately needed. We suggest developing such resources to bridge the gap between general English proficiency and the specific requirements of military communication. Consequently, these new educational resources might help both teachers and cadets, whereas the teachers will have a developed and settled way of educating cadets in the long run.

1 CADET: A STUDENT, A SOLDIER, AN INDIVIDUAL

English proficiency is not just an academic requirement. It is a practical necessity for cadets at the Armed Forces Academy. A strong command of English ensures seamless communication in multinational training exercises, enhancing operational performance. It empowers cadets to read and understand technical manuals, follow instructions accurately, and engage with allied forces. English proficiency also opens doors to reading and discussing international military literature, attending international defense conferences, and participating in strategic debates, thereby enriching their professional development.

There are various ways in which cadets at the Armed Forces Academy differ from ordinary ESL students. The intensity of the organization, such as a military academy, and the discipline of their learning environment reflect the military training environment. Due to their demanding schedules, cadets frequently have little time for language study. In addition, their future positions will need them to be fluent in military jargon, technical terms, command structures, international communication norms, and general English.

Cadets' desire to study English is also specifically linked to their career goals. Cadets are aware that their ability to communicate in English can immediately influence their effectiveness and ability to advance in their careers within the military, in contrast to civilian students whose English studies may be more academic or recreational in nature. A curriculum instantly applicable to their future roles must be practical, relevant, and have a strong professional focus.

At the Armed Forces Academy, cadets are simultaneously students and soldiers. This dual identity calls for a unique approach to teaching languages. To succeed as students and, more importantly, to become full-featured and valued military officers of the 21st century, they need a thorough educational framework that encourages critical thinking, academic rigor, and the capacity to interact with intricate theoretical ideas. Soldiers require practical language abilities to carry out commands, participate in tactical communications, and communicate successfully in multicultural settings during joint operations that are becoming more frequent.

English resources available at the Armed Forces Academy today do not sufficiently address this dichotomy. Most of them are outdated and not tailored to the needs of the Slovak Armed Forces and NATO. Traditional textbooks' frequent restricted concentration on either academic or military contexts leaves an incomplete picture of a comprehensive language

education appropriate for an individual who is both a student and a soldier. A new textbook and workbook must integrate academic and military English to provide cadets with the vocabulary, grammatical structures, and contextual understanding required for their academic endeavors and military tasks.

Every cadet offers the Armed Forces Academy a distinct combination of experiences, skills, and learning preferences. Effective language training requires an understanding of this distinctiveness and the ability to accommodate it. Differentiated instruction methodologies should be incorporated into the new educational materials to provide tailored learning paths that accommodate a range of skill levels and learning preferences.

According to Tennant, learners acquire structures or models to understand the world, but they should participate in frameworks that have meaning and relate their classroom experience with the reality of the outside world. Participation in a community is a necessary component of learning, and the situational model uses language to try and create identifiable patterns of reality. In aiming at integrating themselves into the community whose language they are studying, the learners are concerned with identification, with learning to talk, act, and improvise in ways that make sense in the community. (Tennant, 1997)

The role of a military English teacher or SME (subject matter expert) is nonetheless important. It includes the acknowledgment that a military English teacher's decision about what kind of approach to use is impacted by a number of important considerations, including the goals, the scope and depth of the material, the classroom's physical layout, and the cadets' capacity to learn using the selected strategy. The chosen approach must support cadets in meeting course objectives and be in line with the teacher's preferences. Palmer highlights that "the identity and integrity of the teacher is the foundation of good teaching." Stated differently, "We teach who we are." (Palmer, 2007)

The best learning environment is produced by the bond between a teacher and cadets. Therefore, the integration of a military SME and creating an environment for teaching military English will subsequently familiarize cadets with the specific military needs and help them learn in a more friendly, familiar, and approachable manner.

Interactive components, including self-assessment tools, adaptive learning modules, and a variety of exercises, should address individual needs and be available online at all times. Case studies and real-world scenarios pertinent to cadets' future roles should also be included to make learning more applicable and engaging. This method improves language learning and gives cadets a sense of motivation and ownership over their English language learning path, hand in hand with their military path.

2 OBJECTIVES OF PROPOSED TEXTBOOK AND WORKBOOK

The main goal of creating a workbook and textbook for cadets at the Armed Forces Academy is to provide a thorough educational resource that caters to cadets' unique linguistic

and professional needs as future military personnel. With the help of proposed new academic resources, learners can close the gap between their general English ability and the specialized language abilities needed for technical communications, international cooperation, and military operations.

The following objectives outline the goals and focus areas of the proposed textbook and workbook:

a. Develop general English skills

- **Comprehensive language proficiency**

One of the main objectives of the textbook and workbook will be to enhance the cadets' general English language proficiency in all four modalities—speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This all-encompassing strategy guarantees that cadets can converse well in various settings, both inside and outside military contexts.

- **Speaking**

Fluency and pronunciation: Exercises designed to improve fluency and accuracy in spoken English, focusing on pronunciation and intonation.

Conversation skills: Cadets are encouraged to practice and develop their conversational skills through role-plays and dialogues that mimic real-life situations in the military field.

- **Listening**

Comprehension: Listening exercises that include various audio materials, such as conversations, lectures, and news reports, to develop listening comprehension skills.

Note-taking: Techniques for taking insightful notes during listening assignments are critical for comprehending instructions and briefings.

- **Reading**

Comprehension strategies: These include methods such as skimming, scanning, and detailed reading that help them become better readers.

Diverse texts: Reading various texts, including reports, stories, and articles, will help them develop a wide range of reading skills.

- **Writing**

Writing techniques: Guidance on various writing formats and styles, such as emails, reports, and essays.

Grammar and syntax: Proper grammar and syntax are emphasized to guarantee clarity and accuracy in written communication.

b. Introduce military-specific vocabulary

- **Specialized terminology**

Cadets must be conversant in a wide variety of military-specific terminology to carry out their responsibilities. The textbook and workbook teach and reinforce this specialist language to guarantee that cadets can comprehend and correctly utilize it in their professional setting.

- **Technical phrases**

Equipment and weaponry: Terms pertaining to military vehicles, technology, weaponry, and equipment.

Operations and commands: These are terms used in planning and executing military operations, including military commands, ranks, command structures, and strategic terminology.

- **Communication protocols**

Voice and radio commands: Customary expressions and procedures utilized for voice and radio commands in military formations.

Abbreviations and acronyms: Familiarity with common military acronyms and abbreviations is essential for concise and effective communication.

c. Enhance comprehension of military documents

- **Reading and interpreting military texts**

Comprehending and generating military documentation is essential for cadets as future military leaders. The goal of the textbook and workbook will be to help them become more proficient readers, interpreters, and writers of various military texts so they can manage the paperwork needed for their jobs.

- **Manuals and technical guides**

Technical manuals: Techniques for understanding difficult technical manuals and guidelines, such as using schematics and diagrams.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): Instruction on reading and following SOPs is critical for maintaining operational consistency and safety.

- **Reports and correspondence**

Military reports: Training on writing and interpreting different types of military reports, such as after-action reports, intelligence summaries, and operational briefs. These will include templates of military reports in either the textbook or workbook, such as METHANE, METT-TC, OPORD, SALTA, 5 LINERS, CASEVAC, MEDEVAC, etc.

Official correspondence: Guidelines for drafting official military correspondence, including memos, orders, and requests.

d. Build confidence in communication

- **Formal and informal contexts**

Confident communication in official and casual contexts is a prerequisite for cadets. The exercises and activities in the textbook and workbook are intended to help students become more competent and confident in various communication situations.

- **Briefings and presentations (Formal)**

Gain experience giving presentations and briefings, focusing on structure, audience participation, and clarity.

- **Negotiations and diplomacy (Formal)**

Cadets learn tact and negotiation abilities through role-playing activities that mimic diplomatic encounters and negotiations.

- **Interpersonal skills (Informal)**

Interpersonal communication skills-enhancing activities include team-building exercises, casual conversations, and small talk.

- **Cultural sensitivity (Informal)**

Training on cultural differences and appropriate communication styles in international military contexts.

e. Foster critical thinking and problem-solving abilities

- **Analytical skills**

The textbook and workbook will include tasks that promote critical thinking and problem-solving, crucial for military decision-making and strategic planning.

- **Scenario-based learning using real case studies**

Analysis of case studies and actual military operations and situations within the military field develops analytical abilities and strategic thinking.

CONCLUSION

The textbook and workbook will be organized into theme modules combining general English instruction with military-specific content focusing on the Armed Forces Academy of General M. R. Štefánik, Slovak Armed Forces, and NATO to accomplish these goals. Every unit will include grammar, vocabulary, reading, speaking, listening, and writing tasks. These elements will be planned to complement one another, offering a thorough and well-rounded educational experience.

Examples of possible titles of new textbooks and workbooks:

- **1 OPERATION FLUENT: Military English language Textbook** *"From boot camp to book camp."*
- **1 OPERATION FLUENT: Military English language Workbook** *"Cadet life: March, study, repeat."*
- **2 BATTLE READY: Military English language Textbook** *"Strategic planning: both on the field and in exams."*
- **2 BATTLE READY: Military English language Workbook** *"Field training for the brain."*

An important step forward in military education could be made with the creation and subsequent implementation and use of the new military English textbook and workbook at the Armed Forces Academy of General M. R. Štefánik. This educational tool might seamlessly integrate cadets' roles as individuals, soldiers, and students to meet their specific needs. A genuine and compelling representation of what it means to be a military officer should be given via the textbook and workbook, which mirror the cadets' everyday lives and experiences. This all-encompassing method guarantees that cadets are ready for a myriad of situations they may encounter during their military careers.

One of this teaching resource's main advantages could be its familiar and approachable style, which makes difficult military topics understandable and relatable. The inclusion of real-life photos and activities from the military program, which could be produced in close cooperation with School Units, would add adds a layer of authenticity and practical significance. This methodology might improve the educational process and fill the knowledge gap between theory and practice.

This textbook and workbook will comply with STANAG 6001 standards, guaranteeing that cadets' language competency should meet worldwide military criteria. Developing and including a personalized STANAG 6001 exam would indicate the dedication to excellent education and cadets' readiness for joint military operations with NATO partners.

Furthermore, this adaptability would go beyond its intended audience. Because of its design might be used in various English language classes, such as those provided by the Language Institute of Slovak Armed Forces for military personnel. This flexibility should demonstrate the workbook and textbook's wider relevance and contribution to the improvement of military education as a whole.

In conclusion, the new textbook and workbook for cadets at the Armed Forces Academy of General M. R. Štefánik will embody a comprehensive and practical approach to military education. This resource could make a significant contribution to the preparation of future military leaders by addressing the diverse duties of cadets and offering a realistic representation of military life. Its alignment with international standards and potential for wider application further solidify its value as an essential educational tool in the Slovak Armed Forces. It will stand as a testament to the commitment to military training and education excellence.

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