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Peculiarities of teaching junior schoolchildren foreign-language oral speech

The article deals with the peculiarities of teaching junior schoolchildren foreign-language oral speech. The work also raises the problem of the necessity of teaching foreign languages at an elementary school. Authors explored peculiarities of psychological and physiological development of children of younger school age, studied and analyzed the works of psychologists and methodologists on a research problem, on the basis of which conclusions are made about necessity of a foreign language teaching at an early age, assuming acquaintance with the peculiarities of culture of the people of the country of the studied language. In the conclusion authors offered some recommendations about specificity of teaching junior schoolchildren oral speech at English lessons.

Key words: oral foreign-language speech, early training, lexical and grammatical skills, junior schoolchildren, monological and dialogical communication, younger school age, psychological and physiological peculiarities, pronunciation skills, lexical material, speech and situational exercises.

*The earlier we will start teaching
a foreign language to children, the earlier
we will acquaint them with the world
of the children speaking other languages*

R. Freudenstein

Today the knowledge of a foreign language is an integral part of an educational system in Kazakhstan. Earlier, there was not attached much importance to knowledge of foreign languages. It was studied at the same level, as any other school subject. But globalization processes, changes in economic, social, cultural life of the society caused changes in the system of language education: different innovations have been introduced, programs and concepts are created, promoting improvement and perfection of teaching foreign languages at school. Thanks to it quality of foreign languages training is being improved. In order to know a foreign language at the professional level, it is necessary to start its study at an early school age that was emphasized in one of the messages of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan [1].

In the process of teaching a foreign language, we have to remember that simultaneous development of oral and written language skills isn't always reasoned at the junior stage of its mastering, due to certain features of the psychological and physiological development of junior schoolchildren. Many foreign educators,

psychologists, linguists and methodologists (M. Berlits, F. Gouin, M. Walther, V. Fiyetor, P. Passy, H. Sweet, O. Jespersen, B. Eggert, Sh. Schweitzer, G. Vendt, E. Simoneau, G. Palmer, M. West, L. Bloomfield, C. Fries, R. Lado) believed that it was necessary to begin foreign language study with oral speech [2].

The paper focusses on the peculiarities of teaching junior schoolchildren foreign-language oral speech.

The great Russian educator K.D. Ushinskiy believed that proper organization of educational process supposes training children foreign languages at an early age. In his opinion, child's speech development should be performed by means of improving child's thinking, basing on specific visual images, visibility.

Questions of early training foreign languages were in focus of educators at the end of the XIX century. On the one hand, publications, concerning the problem of early foreign language teaching manifested about undoubted advantage of teaching and learning a foreign language at an early age; on the other hand many educators treated negatively this question as they supposed that the general educational value of a foreign language learning was small and consisted only in studying its system, which was available only to senior schoolchildren. Therefore, in their opinion in junior school a foreign language was deprived of any educational value.

The developing value of teaching and learning a foreign language was studied later carefully by academician L.V. Shcherba and his followers. Academician L.V. Shcherba wrote that proper arrangement of teaching a foreign language would contribute to the development of logical thinking, improving already developed cognitive operations and formation of the ability to construct the discourse logically.

In 1962 according to the decision of UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) at schools of England and Wales there was an experiment on the problem of early foreign language teaching, results of which allowed to make a conclusion that foreign language lessons positively influenced general development of children, raised their educational and cultural levels, contributed to improvement of knowledge of the native language. Researches of leading universities of the USA and Canada in the 80th years showed that bilingual children's cognitive abilities were developed better, than of monolingual ones. Especially so-called metalinguistic abilities differed favorably, i. e. abilities flexibly and at the abstract level to acquire language that was manifested by children in judgments about grammar of the native language, in understanding of a word-play, etc. Bilingual children mastered reading faster.

In numerous studies and experiments of Russian (L.S. Vygotsky, S.L. Rubinstein) and foreign psychologists (J. Bruner, W. Penfield, R. Roberts, B. White, T. Eliot, etc.) there were revealed the sensitive periods in assimilation of foreign-language speech. The age of child from the birth to 8–9 years old is the most sensitive for his or her speech development, languages skills at this age are developed and absorbed much easier, than in subsequent years.

Researches of psychologists and educators point to the fact that in spite of the easy foreign language acquisition by small children, even in the natural environment it is a complex process, built not on imitation, but also on generalization, though it is internally unconscious [3, 4]. It was also established that a child learns a foreign language more easily than an adult, only if he/she masters it in conditions of real communication, the source of which for a given age is an educational game. Real inclusion in new game provides true internal motivation of learning language by children. Educational opportunities of a game in a foreign language teaching were studied by Russian (L.S. Vygotsky, V.V. Davydov, D.B. Elkonin) and Kazakh (G.N. Amandykova, Sh.E. Sarsembayeva, A.Zh. Sarlybayeva) educators [5].

Psychological peculiarities of younger schoolchildren development create special conditions for learning a foreign language. Children of 7–10 years old absorb a foreign language like a sponge indirectly and subconsciously. They understand the situation in a foreign language in the same way as in their mother tongue. Attention capacity and time of concentration are very short, but gradually when they become older they are increased. Younger schoolchildren have a well-developed long-term memory (the learned material, is remembered for a long time). Ways of receiving and assimilating information by children are different too: visual, auditory, kinesthetic. And the best incentive for junior pupils' further learning for pupils of 1–4 grades is the feeling of success.

In addition, when the teacher is planning foreign-language communication with younger schoolchildren, he/she has to take into consideration the child's level of language development in the native language, then teaching a foreign language will be more successful.

Also it is necessary to take into account physical development of children at the age of 7–10 years old. Muscle development affects the child's ability to concentrate attention to a page, a line or a word that is necessary for the ability to read. It also influences the ability to hold a pencil or a pen, scissors, a brush. For pupils to achieve fine motor coordination, as well as coordination between visual perception and mechanical

movement, their hands need continuous training. Small children can't sit quietly for a long time because of the lack of control over motor muscles. Therefore, it is desirable during a lesson to give them such tasks, which would allow children to move around a class (games, songs with the movements, dances).

Younger children (1–4 grades) are characterized by the following psychological and physiological peculiarities of the development:

- need for the movement;
- need for communication;
- need for feeling safety;
- need for a praise for each small successful step;
- need for a touch, drawing, designing, mimicry;
- need for feeling themselves as an individual and a teacher should treat them in an appropriate way.

The necessity of an early foreign language teaching and learning is officially recognized worldwide. No one doubts the fact that the human intellect progresses most rapidly at children's age — from the birth to 12 years old. Optimal conditions for development of the speech, both in the native and foreign languages occur prior to the maturity of a child, and the child's development goes along with his/her maturity simultaneously. Early foreign language teaching and learning gives a big practical effect in respect to the quality of mastery, as the communicative skills acquired at an early age are fixed for the rest of life and form a reliable basis for further training.

Early learning of a foreign language renders:

- positive influence on the development of mental functions of the child: his memory, attention, thinking, perception, imagination, etc.;
- the stimulating influence on the general speech abilities of the child;
- big opportunities for teaching and learning second/third / foreign languages, need of their mastery is becoming increasingly obvious in the conditions of a multicultural environment.

The educational and developmental value of early teaching and learning a foreign language is indisputable. It is demonstrated in earlier entry of the child into universal culture with the help of his/her communication in a new language. In this case, the constant appeal to the experience of the child, taking into account his/her psychological peculiarities, his/her perception of reality allow children to realize better the phenomena of his/her own national culture in comparison with the culture of the countries of the studied language. Early learning of a foreign language is of a great educational and moral value, due to the fact that the acquisition of a foreign language as a means of communication assumes familiarity with the socio-cultural features of native speakers — the people of the studied target language, development of such qualities as tolerance and sensitivity to distinctions in culture, ways of expressing feelings [6].

Training oral speech is one of the most complex tasks in the course of teaching a foreign language. Oral speech is a broad concept, including main types of speech activity: reading, listening, speaking, dialogical and monological speech.

The main reason for difficulties in teaching and learning a foreign-language oral speech is the fact that language material for pupils to master acts absolutely in new aspect; it is necessary to acquire it actively as a means of communication, but not just for recognition and identification, which is a task of a receptive perception of the language.

When a pupil is reading to himself/herself (silent reading), he or she has an opportunity to read unclear place two or three times, while during listening in a certain extent he/she follows the speaker's speech tempo that creates additional difficulties for understanding.

The highest degree of difficulty is self-expression of thoughts and feelings by means of a target language. The speaker has to know not only the syntactic and morphological structure of the language, but also a complex system of combinability of words that is always specific and in most cases does not coincide with combinability in the native language.

The grammar system of the majority of languages of the world has already been analyzed and scientifically systematized, and its conscious mastery by consecutive exercises doesn't present any special difficulties. As for lexicon, this area is not studied fully yet. Meanwhile, when we are talking about the automated mastery of the language structure, it is meant, first of all, the automated mastery of word usage. It is one of the most difficult objectives of oral speech [7].

What are the prospects of training junior schoolchildren oral foreign-language speech for the development of their foreign language communication skills? Learning foreign languages in junior school creates for pupils the opportunities to improve their oral speech skills:

- to pronounce correctly and distinguish foreign language sounds, words, phrases and sentences; observe intonation of the main types of the sentence;
- to master the most frequently used vocabulary within the junior stage program, master productive lexical minimum at least no less than 500 lexical units. The total amount of vocabulary, including receptive lexical minimum, is no less than 600 lexical units;
- to gain some understanding of the main grammatical categories of the studied language, distinguish the studied vocabulary and grammar during the reading and listening and use them in oral communication;
- to understand aurally the speech of the teacher, classmates, the main contents of the facilitated texts with a support of visual presentation and a language guess;
- to take an active part in dialogical communication: carry on etiquette dialogues and elementary bilateral dialogue-questioning on the given speech situation of every day communication;
- to speak briefly on the topics selected for the elementary school, reproduce by heart familiar rhymed works of children's folklore;
- to get control over the reading technique aloud; read to themselves school and facilitated authentic texts, using skimming, scanning and detailed types of reading;
- to write a short congratulation and a personal letter (supported with the example), fill in the simple questionnaire about oneself;
- to acquire basic information about the country of the studied language [8].

Researchers L.S. Panov's, V.L. Skalkin and others consider that foreign language speaking skills are developed within the following stages:

The Ist stage — oral speech, lexical and grammar skills formation;

The IInd stage — oral speech, lexical and grammar skills improvement;

The IIIrd stage — development of abilities of unprepared oral speech [9].

The mechanism of the speech is developed correctly, if a teacher in the process of training follows to these stages, because the start of speech mechanisms is impossible without formed at the sufficient level lexical and grammar skills of speaking.

Shortcomings in early foreign language teaching and learning is reflected in pupils' oral communication. It is difficult for pupils to manage spontaneous unprepared speech; their communicative activity becomes only reading, understanding and reproduction of the given text.

For forming and improving foreign-language lexical and grammar skills, the teacher can define series of training exercises, the use of which is considered to be the most rational. The system of training exercises, which is used by the teacher, is of great importance because their application enables to fix vocabulary in pupils' memory and use correct grammar in constructing sentences.

Training activities, speech exercises should be of a situational character, give an opportunity for pupils to carry out practical tasks, develop their communicative skills. They should include tasks on reasoning, analyzing and expressing one's view point.

For formation and improvement junior schoolchildren foreign-language oral speech skills it is important to use lexical and grammatical structures (Substitution tables), which give the possibility purposefully practice the use of colloquial speech clichés, combine various structures in the speech depending on communicative connection.

Practice of teaching oral speech shows that lexical and grammar structures correspond to the nature of those skills, which are formed and improved (I, II stages) in teaching oral speech. They allow providing rather strong oral speech skills for constructing unprepared monological and dialogical utterances. Structures are practiced by pupils in chorus, individually; they can be used during a group, pair and individual forms of work. The process of forming mechanism of speech reproduction requires from the teacher skills to differentiate teaching techniques and methods, which provide productivity of work [9].

For training junior schoolchildren foreign-language oral speech skills, it is beneficial to use the techniques, which encourage their physical activity. They are: role-playing, cognitive games, dramatization, staging (English folklore and the author's fairy tales), coloring, drawing, singing and dancing.

As it was mentioned above, the development and improvement of foreign-language speech skills of pupils is carried out within the speech, situational exercises.

Studying the topics «My favourite toys», «Sports», «Seasons», «Food», «Clothes» is aimed at enriching learners' culture-oriented linguistic knowledge and skills. The desire of pupils to expand their own outlook, wish to learn more about the life of the country of the studied language, its geography, history, ways of life, etc. is one of the most important motivational incentives of foreign language learning. Development of motivation to the study through introduction to foreign-language culture is extremely important as foreign-language communication in the conditions of school training isn't supported by the language environment.

In the conclusion, it is important to highlight some recommendations on teaching younger schoolchildren oral foreign-language speech.

At the junior level of teaching and learning a foreign language, the main attention should be concentrated on the development of understanding of colloquial English by children and developing pronunciation skills:

- the full perception is developed through the constant practice of frequently used English words;
- phrases and speech clichés are learnt by heart through singing;
- recognition and the use of frequently used words occur during a game.

It is necessary to remember about the criteria selection of lexical material for children at the junior level of teaching:

- all the words studied at the given stage have to mean concepts, well-known to the pupil in the native language;
- words should be frequently used in a language and be compatible with each other.

The following exercises are recommended for formation of lexical skills:

- guessing (words, toys, pictures, riddles);
- drawing, molding, application, coloring and naming the object, molded by children;
- physical activity (naming actions, performance of actions and commands);
- game on attention/comprehension (the teacher names a lexical unit and shows a toy or a picture; children repeat in chorus only those words, which are shown on the picture);
- a choice of words/pictures according to a subject or on a situation;
- competition;
- the game «lotto» with pictures/dominoes, etc.

In conclusion, we resume that efficiency of junior schoolchildren oral foreign-language communicative skills formation is determined not only by the knowledge and mastery of the language material, but also by readiness and desire of children to be an active participant of cross-cultural communication in English. For achievement of young learners' success in language learning, it is important the educational activities of schoolchildren be not only listening, speaking, reading or writing in a foreign language, but active communication in real life situations of a teacher and pupils and pupils among themselves.

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Бастауыш сынып оқушылардың шетел тілде сөйлей білу біліктілігіне үйретудің ерекшеліктері

Мақалада бастауыш мектеп оқушыларын шетел тілінде ауызша сөйлеуге үйрету ерекшеліктері қарастырылды. Сонымен қатар шетел тілін оқытуды ерте жастан бастауыш мектепте енгізуді талдайды. Шетел тілінде ауызша сөйлеу біліктерін қалыптасыру, дамыту және жетілдіру үшін түрлі жаттығуларын қолдану бойынша нұсқаулар (ұсыныстар) келтірілген. Авторлар бастауыш мектеп оқушыларын ағылшын тілі сабақтарында ауызекі сөйлеуге үйрету ерекшеліктері бойынша кейбір ұсыныстар берген.

У.И.Копжасарова, Е.В.Антонцева

Особенности обучения младших школьников иноязычной устной речи

В работе освещается проблема раннего обучения иностранным языкам в начальной школе. Показаны пути совершенствования иноязычной устной речи с учетом психолого-физиологического развития детей младшего школьного возраста. Изучены и проанализированы труды ученых-психологов и методистов по проблеме исследования, на основе которых делаются выводы о востребованности раннего обучения иностранному языку, несущему в себе большой воспитательный и нравственный потенциал, предполагающему знакомство с особенностями народа страны изучаемого языка. Авторами предложены некоторые рекомендации по специфике обучения младших школьников устной речи на уроках английского языка.

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