DEVELOPMENT OF COHERENT SPEECH IN OLDER PRESCHOOL CHILDREN THROUGH DIDACTIC GAMES

A.S. Nazarova
Teacher at the Department of "Preschool and Primary Education",
Asia International University

Annotation: This article examines the potential of didactic games for developing coherent speech in children aged 5–7. A classification of didactic games according to speech tasks is presented, and the pedagogical conditions for their effective use and the criteria for assessing coherent speech are identified. Practical recommendations for preschool teachers are given.

Keywords: coherent speech, older preschool age, didactic games, speech development, monologue, dialogue, preschool education.

Introduction. Older preschool age (5–7 years) is the period when speech becomes the main means of communication and preparation for school. At this age a child must learn to express thoughts consistently, logically and grammatically correctly: to retell a text, to compose a story based on a picture, to describe an object or an event. In practice, however, many children have insufficiently developed coherent speech: their stories are fragmentary and poor in content, and the sequence of presentation is disrupted. Play remains the leading activity of a preschooler, so didactic games are one of the most natural and effective means of developing coherent speech.

Aim. To substantiate theoretically the possibilities of didactic games in developing coherent speech in older preschool children and to determine the conditions for their effective use.

Objectives:

to analyze the features of coherent speech in children aged 5–7;
to systematize didactic games in accordance with speech tasks;
to determine the pedagogical conditions for using didactic games in speech development classes;
to identify criteria for assessing the level of coherent speech development;
to develop practical recommendations for preschool teachers.

Coherent speech is a detailed, logically and grammatically structured utterance that is understandable to the listener without additional explanation. It exists in two forms: dialogic and monologic. Dialogic speech develops earlier and relies on the situation of communication, whereas monologic speech (description, narration, retelling) requires voluntariness, the ability to plan an utterance and to select language means. Therefore, monologic speech becomes the main focus of work in the older and school-preparatory groups. By the age of 6–7 a child should be able to compose a story from a picture or a series of pictures, retell a literary text and tell about events from personal experience, observing the structure of the utterance: beginning, main part and ending. The development of coherent speech is closely connected with thinking, attention and memory, and is also the most important condition for successfully mastering writing and reading at school.

Classification of Didactic Games by Speech Tasks

Type of game	Speech task
Games with objects ("The Magic Bag")	Describing an object by its features; enriching speech with definitions and comparisons

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Type of game	Speech task
Board and printed games (lotto, "Cut-up Pictures")	Composing sentences and a short story based on pictures
Word games ("Finish the Word", "What Doesn't Belong?")	Classification and generalization, the ability to justify an answer, precision in word use
Dramatization and role-play games	Dialogic speech, intonational expressiveness, retelling a fairy tale by roles
Games with picture sequences ("Make a Story from a Series of Pictures")	Building a consistent narrative: beginning, middle, end
Communicative games ("Telephone", "Interview")	The ability to ask questions, listen to the interlocutor and maintain a dialogue

The effectiveness of didactic games depends on how they are organized. L.S. Vygotsky emphasized that in play a child acts at a higher level than in everyday life, which means that play creates favorable conditions for mastering new speech skills. Speech development methodology (M.M. Alekseeva, V.I. Yashina, O.S. Ushakova, F.A. Sokhin) notes that coherent speech is formed on the basis of a model, visual support and a gradual increase in the complexity of speech tasks. A didactic game should have not only an entertaining form but also a clearly set speech task, which the child understands and solves in the course of play actions. The teacher plays an important role: he or she demonstrates a model utterance, helps with leading questions, and encourages each child's independence and speech initiative. Play activity should be combined with speech development classes, reading fiction and everyday communication.

Pedagogical conditions for the effective use of didactic games:

a clear speech task — so that the game does not turn into entertainment without an educational result;

the teacher's speech model — for mastering the structure of description and narration;

reliance on visual aids (pictures, diagrams, mnemonic tables) — for planning the utterance;

gradual increase in complexity — from describing an object to a story from a series of pictures and a creative story;

variety and entertainment value — for maintaining children's interest and speech activity.

An analysis of the scientific and methodological literature and of preschool education practice shows that with the systematic use of didactic games, children's active vocabulary expands, the grammatical structure of speech improves, and speech activity and independence increase. The level of coherent speech development is usually assessed by the following criteria: completeness and content of the utterance, consistency of presentation, grammatical correctness, richness of vocabulary, expressiveness and independence. Observations of children show that those who regularly take part in speech games enter into communication more willingly, build extended utterances more confidently and need less help from an adult.

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Conclusion. The development of coherent speech is one of the central tasks of speech development in older preschool children. A didactic game, combining learning with the child's leading activity, makes it possible to develop the skills of describing, narrating and retelling in a natural and engaging way. The effectiveness of the work is ensured by a clearly formulated speech task, the teacher's speech model, reliance on visual aids and a gradual increase in the complexity of the material. Teachers are recommended to include didactic games systematically in speech development classes, to select them taking into account children's age and individual characteristics, and to involve parents in consolidating speech skills at home.

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