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DEVELOPING PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' SPEECH COMPETENCE THROUGH LEARNING TASKS AND EFFECTIVE TEACHING METHODS

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Abstract: The development of speech competence is an essential component of primary education, as it enables young learners to communicate effectively, express their thoughts clearly, and participate actively in the learning process. This article examines the role of learning tasks and methodological approaches in developing primary school students' speech competence. Particular attention is paid to stimulating students' speech activity, improving their understanding of educational texts, developing coherent oral and written communication, and enriching their vocabulary. The article also discusses practical methods such as creating problem-based speech situations, analyzing text content, planning statements, retelling, composition writing, and systematic vocabulary exercises. The effective implementation of these methods contributes to the development of students' communicative abilities, independent thinking, and language proficiency.

Keywords: speech competence, primary education, communication skills, learning tasks, speech development, educational text, vocabulary enrichment, retelling, coherent speech, teaching methods.

Introduction

In contemporary education, communication competence and literacy are considered essential factors for successful participation in academic, social, and professional activities. Children begin to develop communication and speaking abilities from an early age. By the time they enter primary school, they already possess certain linguistic and communicative skills acquired through interaction with family members, peers, and their surrounding environment. However, these abilities require systematic development within the educational process.

Primary school is a particularly important stage in the formation of speech competence. At this age, children develop their ability to understand information, formulate ideas, express personal opinions, and communicate with others. The quality of their speech is closely connected with their cognitive development, academic performance, and social adaptation. Students who can express their thoughts clearly and logically generally find it easier to establish relationships with classmates and teachers, participate in classroom discussions, and understand educational materials.

Speech competence can be understood as an integrated personal resource that ensures effective communication. It includes communicative abilities, knowledge about communication, and practical communication skills. Therefore, developing speech competence should not be limited to teaching grammatical rules or expanding vocabulary. It should involve the purposeful formation of students' ability to perceive, interpret, organize, and communicate information in different situations.

The purpose of this article is to examine the methodological foundations of developing primary school students' speech competence through learning tasks and to identify effective approaches to organizing speech-development activities.

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Speech competence is a multidimensional concept consisting of several interconnected elements: communicative abilities, communicative knowledge, and communicative skills and actions.

Communicative abilities refer to an individual's capacity to establish and maintain interaction with other people. They are associated with both natural personal characteristics and the development of communication experience. Communicative knowledge includes information about the nature of communication, its types, stages, patterns, and the methods and means that can be applied in different communicative situations.

Communicative skills involve the practical application of this knowledge. They enable learners to express their thoughts, understand other people's statements, ask and answer questions, participate in conversations, and construct coherent oral and written texts.

The formation of these components should begin during primary school. A student's ability to speak effectively reflects not only their knowledge of language but also their understanding of the surrounding world, capacity for logical thinking, and ability to defend their opinions. Consequently, speech development contributes to both academic achievement and personal growth.

Considering the age-related characteristics of primary school students, speech-development activities should be organized systematically. Literary texts, observations of the surrounding environment, personal experiences, and classroom communication can serve as important resources for developing students' speech.

The development of speech competence requires a consistent system of educational activities. Several methodological principles can be identified as particularly important.

1. Stimulating students' speech activity

One of the main conditions for developing speech competence is encouraging students to express their thoughts freely. In the classroom, learners should be provided with opportunities to ask questions, explain their understanding, share impressions, and participate in discussions.

Teachers should create a supportive learning environment in which students are not afraid of making mistakes. When learners feel confident, they become more willing to communicate and gradually develop the ability to formulate independent statements.

Learning tasks can include describing familiar objects, explaining events, answering questions, comparing situations, and expressing personal opinions. Such activities stimulate active language use and help students overcome hesitation in communication.

2. Deepening the semantic understanding of educational texts

Working with educational texts is an important means of developing students' ability to understand and communicate information. Text-based activities should encourage learners to identify the main topic, recognize meaningful sections, understand relationships between events, and distinguish essential information from secondary details.

Reading texts should be selected according to students' age and language-development levels. Narrative texts are particularly useful because they provide opportunities to identify characters, events, actions, and the sequence of occurrences.

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Adapted texts can also be used to help learners understand the structural organization of written language. Teachers may divide a text into meaningful sections and guide students in identifying the main idea of each section. This activity prepares learners to construct logically organized oral and written statements.

Subtopics and microthemes serve as semantic reference points that help students understand the internal structure of a text. By identifying these elements, learners gradually acquire the ability to organize information and present it coherently.

3. Introducing basic concepts of text linguistics

An important aspect of speech development is helping students understand how texts are organized. At the primary level, learners can gradually become familiar with such concepts as a group of sentences, an independent sentence, a paragraph, and different types of texts.

A group of sentences forms a meaningful unit within a text. Students should learn to recognize semantic connections between sentences and understand how lexical and grammatical means contribute to textual coherence.

The concept of a paragraph can be introduced through practical exercises. Learners may identify where a new paragraph begins, determine the number of meaningful sections in a text, and explain why particular sentences belong together.

Students should also become familiar with the main types of texts:

- **Narration:** presenting events in a logical sequence.
- **Description:** explaining the characteristics of an object, person, or phenomenon.
- **Reasoning:** expressing an opinion and supporting it with explanations or arguments.

Understanding these text types enables learners to select appropriate language structures according to the purpose of communication.

4. Organizing systematic exercises for coherent speech

Coherent speech develops through regular practice in both oral and written communication. Retelling and composition writing are among the important activities used for this purpose.

At the initial stage, students can reproduce a model provided by the teacher. Gradually, they should move towards more independent activities, including preparing their own plans, selecting relevant information, and constructing original statements.

The sequence of exercises should take into account the level of students' independence. Tasks that require reproducing a given example can precede activities that involve independent text construction. Although different methods may be used within one lesson, each should have a specific instructional purpose.

The methodological organization of speech-development activities involves several interconnected teaching methods.

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Problem-based speech situations encourage learners to think independently and express their ideas. Such situations arise when students encounter an unfamiliar problem, an incomplete statement, or a text containing information that requires clarification.

For example, a teacher may present a text with sentences arranged in the wrong order and ask students to restore its logical sequence. Learners can also be asked to compare two statements, identify an inconsistency, or explain why a particular answer is more appropriate.

Questions such as "Why?", "How?", and "What would happen if...?" encourage students to go beyond simple reproduction of information. They stimulate reasoning, discussion, and the development of independent speech.

Text analysis is aimed at developing students' ability to understand the content and structure of written information. Teachers can guide learners through a series of questions:

- What is the text about?
- Who or what is described?
- Where and when do the events take place?
- What happens first and what happens next?
- How does the situation develop?
- Why do the characters act in a particular way?

For instance, when working with L. Jarikov's fairy tale *The Oak and the Wind*, the teacher can organize the lesson through several stages. First, students examine the title and predict the possible content. Then they read the story and identify its main characters. After the initial reading, the teacher asks questions about the events and the characters' actions. Finally, students discuss the relationships between the characters and explain the reasons behind their decisions.

This approach combines reading comprehension with oral communication. It also helps students identify the main idea, distinguish important events, and prepare a coherent retelling.

After analyzing the text, learners can prepare a plan consisting of several meaningful sections. At first, the teacher may provide the plan; later, students can develop it collaboratively and eventually create their own plans independently.

Practical exercises are necessary for helping students understand the relationships between sentences and the organization of paragraphs.

One useful task is arranging groups of sentences in the correct order to create a coherent text. Students should identify the beginning, development, and conclusion of the narrative. They can also select connecting words and expressions that establish logical relationships between sentences.

Another activity involves dividing a continuous text into paragraphs. Learners identify changes in the topic or the development of an idea and determine where a new paragraph should begin.

Such tasks strengthen students' understanding of textual coherence and help them construct their own statements more logically.

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Retelling is an effective method of improving students' speech because it requires them to understand a text, select important information, and reproduce its content in an organized manner.

Several types of retelling can be used:

1. **Detailed retelling:** students reproduce the main content of a text while preserving its important details.

2. **Selective retelling:** learners present only the information related to a particular topic or question.

3. **Concise retelling:** students communicate the central ideas of a text using fewer words.

The development of these skills should follow a gradual sequence. Initially, students can retell texts according to a teacher-prepared plan. Later, they can work with a jointly developed plan and eventually produce independent retellings.

These activities develop memory, comprehension, logical organization, and the ability to distinguish essential information from secondary details.

Composition writing provides opportunities for students to apply their language knowledge in independent communication. It can be organized around personal impressions, observations of seasonal changes, descriptions of objects or work processes, and narratives based on pictures.

For example, students may be asked to describe a seasonal change they have observed, narrate an event from their personal experience, or explain the sequence of actions involved in completing a familiar task.

The complexity of composition activities should increase gradually. Initially, students can produce short statements with teacher support. Later, they can construct longer texts that include an introduction, a logically organized main part, and a conclusion.

Vocabulary development is an essential part of speech education. Words are the basic units through which individuals communicate meanings, express emotions, and describe the world around them. The richness of a student's vocabulary directly influences their ability to express ideas accurately and appropriately.

Vocabulary work in primary education can be organized in four main directions:

Vocabulary enrichment. This involves introducing new words and helping students understand additional meanings of familiar words. New vocabulary can be acquired through reading, classroom discussions, observation, and practical activities.

Vocabulary refinement. This process aims to develop a more precise understanding of word meanings. Students compare synonyms and antonyms, explore the contextual meanings of words, and learn how words are combined in phrases and sentences.

Vocabulary activation. This involves transferring words from students' passive vocabulary into active use. Learners are encouraged to use newly acquired words in conversations, answers, retellings, and independent compositions.

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Elimination of non-literary vocabulary. This direction focuses on helping students recognize and gradually replace dialectal, colloquial, and jargon expressions that are inappropriate in formal or literary communication.

Vocabulary development should not be treated as an isolated stage of a lesson. It should be integrated into reading, speaking, listening, and writing activities.

Teachers can explain unfamiliar words through various techniques:

- demonstrating an object, phenomenon, or action;
- using pictures and illustrations;
- replacing a word with a descriptive phrase;
- selecting synonyms or antonyms;
- providing explanations and examples;
- describing the relevant phenomenon;
- observing an object or event directly;
- explaining a word through its structure;
- identifying the meaning of a word from its context.

The choice of technique depends on the meaning of the word, the context in which it appears, and the age-related characteristics of the learners.

To activate vocabulary, teachers should design tasks that require students to use newly learned words in their own statements. Retelling is particularly effective because learners must select appropriate words and expressions to communicate the main idea of a text.

The effectiveness of speech-development methods depends on their appropriate organization and sequence within the lesson.

A lesson may begin with the creation of a problem-based speech situation to attract students' attention and encourage them to express their initial ideas. This can be followed by reading and analyzing an educational text. During the analysis, the teacher guides students in identifying the topic, subtopics, meaningful sections, and relationships between sentences.

The next stage involves practical exercises aimed at strengthening students' understanding of text structure. Learners may arrange sentences, prepare a plan, select appropriate vocabulary, or complete a retelling task.

Finally, students can independently produce an oral or written statement based on the information they have studied. This stage allows the teacher to observe how effectively learners apply their knowledge and communication skills.

The systematic combination of these activities contributes to the development of students' ability to understand other people's speech and construct their own statements in accordance with language norms.

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Conclusion

The development of speech competence among primary school students is a systematic pedagogical process that requires the integration of communicative, cognitive, linguistic, and practical activities. Learning tasks play an important role in this process because they provide opportunities for students to use language purposefully, understand educational information, and express their thoughts independently.

The analysis demonstrates that stimulating speech activity, deepening the semantic understanding of texts, introducing basic concepts of text structure, and organizing systematic exercises for coherent speech are important methodological directions. Problem-based speech situations, text analysis, planning, detailed and selective retelling, composition writing, and vocabulary exercises can be effectively integrated into primary school lessons.

Particular importance should be attached to the gradual development of students' independence. When learners move from reproducing teacher-provided examples to constructing their own statements, they strengthen their ability to organize information, select appropriate vocabulary, and communicate ideas coherently.

Thus, the purposeful use of learning tasks and a systematic approach to speech-development activities create favorable conditions for improving primary school students' communicative abilities, enriching their vocabulary, developing logical thinking, and increasing their confidence in oral and written communication.

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