

THE USE OF INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES TO PRESCHOOL CHILDREN THROUGH GAME-BASED LEARNING

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Abstract.

This article examines the advantages of using play-based activities in teaching foreign languages to preschool children and discusses the challenges encountered during the language learning process. The study serves as a valuable resource for preschool educators by highlighting the pedagogical significance of play in early foreign language instruction. The article explores the purposes for which play activities can be incorporated into foreign language teaching and analyzes the educational outcomes achieved through their implementation. Furthermore, it discusses effective approaches to overcoming the difficulties and barriers that children encounter while acquiring a foreign language. This article shows the various methods and innovative technologies employed by teachers in teaching foreign languages to children in senior groups of preschool educational organizations. It serves as a valuable practical and methodological resource for educators engaged in the foreign language teaching process. The ideas and approaches presented in the article contribute significantly to facilitating and enhancing the effectiveness of foreign language instruction, thereby supporting the development of children's language competencies in preschool education.

Keywords: play-based activities, state educational standards, speech and thinking, psychological knowledge, motivation, creative competence.

Play is one of the most fundamental activities in the lives of preschool children. It is a unique, multifaceted, and powerful form of activity through which all aspects of a child's physical and psychological development are enhanced. Play represents a natural need of children and serves as an essential means of exploring and understanding the surrounding environment.

Research has consistently demonstrated that the psychological characteristics of preschool-aged children make play a dominant activity in their development. Consequently, organizing educational and instructional processes through various play-based methods has proven to be highly effective. Children's cognitive development progresses through play, and the quality of their play is closely associated with their future academic success. Therefore, play occupies a central role in teaching English vocabulary to preschool learners.

Children's games primarily imitate the actions, occupations, and daily lives of adults. A distinctive feature of play is that children create imaginary life situations while participating in game activities. Individual differences among children are reflected in their imaginative thinking and developmental maturity. Accordingly, methodological recommendations have been developed to define the minimum level of knowledge, skills, and competencies that preschool children are expected to acquire.

According to the national curriculum *The Child of the Third Millennium* and the State Requirements for Preschool Education, children are expected to achieve specific competencies from early childhood until the age of six or seven. The methodological guidelines identify the following minimum language and cognitive development requirements for children aged five to six:

- accurate pronunciation of sounds and words;
- understanding and active recognition of more than 30,000 words;
- constructing sentences based on pictures;
- listening to fairy tales and stories and comprehending their content;
- retelling short stories and fairy tales;
- demonstrating expressive speech;
- describing nature and the surrounding environment;
- reciting five to six short poems from memory;
- expressing ideas independently and drawing conclusions;
- demonstrating logical thinking skills;
- developing age-appropriate cognitive operations, including analysis, synthesis, generalization, clarification, comparison, and classification;

engaging in reasoning and critical reflection;
perceiving the surrounding environment accurately; and
enhancing cognitive abilities through educational games (Grosheva et al., 2018, p. 47).

Emotional perception constitutes one of the most important factors in acquiring psychological knowledge. During the learning process, children's cognitive activity should be stimulated while simultaneously influencing their emotional experiences. When teaching English vocabulary, educators should actively expand children's thinking capacity. According to M. Vohidov, preschool children's thinking is closely related to the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of their organic needs. Failure to satisfy these needs may evoke feelings of discomfort, dissatisfaction, and emotional distress, which influence their behavior (Vohidov, p. 101).

Because preschool children possess a strong sense of curiosity, they frequently experience intellectual emotions such as surprise, wonder, doubt, and confidence. These emotions significantly contribute to the development of thinking. Consequently, English language instruction should consider children's natural inclination toward play. Language acquisition occurs not only through verbal communication but also through the development of sensory perception, including seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting, and using gestures. Since sensory organs are highly developed during the preschool years, children gradually acquire language through the coordinated functioning of multiple sensory analyzers, thereby progressively developing communicative competence in a foreign language.

Speech comprehension begins with recognizing and distinguishing words. According to Sh. Sodiqova, this process is based on neural connections formed within the cerebral cortex, which enable the perception and interpretation of various speech signals. As the human brain processes information, it simultaneously activates attention, stores information in memory, engages thinking processes, and stimulates imagination (Sodiqova, p. 86).

Therefore, speech activity is influenced by all psychological processes, including sensation, perception, attention, imagination, and creativity. Motivation represents

one of the strongest psychological mechanisms that consciously and unconsciously directs individuals toward achieving specific goals. In the context of foreign language instruction for preschool children, motivation plays a decisive role in facilitating active participation in the learning process. Through appropriate motivational strategies, educators can cultivate children's interest in learning a foreign language. In this respect, play-based activities function not only as instructional tools but also as powerful sources of intrinsic motivation that promote active engagement and effective language acquisition. In conclusion, it is important to emphasize that the role of preschool teachers and the innovative pedagogical technologies they employ during the teaching process are crucial to the successful acquisition of foreign language skills by children in senior preschool groups. The effective integration of these advanced teaching approaches facilitates the development of children's foreign language competence from an early age, thereby establishing a strong foundation for their future academic achievement, personal development, and professional success. Consequently, fostering foreign language proficiency during the preschool years represents a significant investment in preparing highly qualified and competent individuals for the future.

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