

ISCKMC 2020

International Scientific Congress «KNOWLEDGE, MAN AND CIVILIZATION»

CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING SPEAKING FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

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Abstract

The problem of teaching English for schoolchildren with disabilities, in particular, with cerebral palsy with preserved intellectual abilities, is topical due to the lack of adapted teaching materials. Therefore, the relevance of the study is determined by the need to develop additional materials for teaching English speaking for children with disabilities, in particular, with cerebral palsy with preserved intellectual abilities, to overcome the language barrier and develop communication skills in foreign languages. The conditions for effective teaching speaking imply a communicative language teaching approach, a favorable psychological climate and a creative atmosphere in the classroom, the use of health-preserving technologies, and the situation of success created for each disabled child. The creation of these conditions and the development of a set of exercises for teaching the monological and dialogical speech in English, included in a series of extended learning activities, contribute to increasing motivation for learning English and have a beneficial effect on the development of this productive type of speech in children with cerebral palsy with preserved intellectual abilities due to the effectiveness of the developed materials.

2357-1330 © 2020 Published by European Publisher.

Keywords: Teaching speaking, schoolchildren with cerebral palsy with preserved intellectual abilities, conditions for effective teaching speaking, the use of health-saving technologies



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1. Introduction

The development of education as a leading factor contributing to the construction of a modern society is ensured by the international laws and regulations, in particular, by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) adopted by the Russian Federation in 2008. One of the mandatory parts of this document is the recognition of the individuality of each child, regardless of his abilities and capabilities. However, the laws are not enough for the inclusion of children with disabilities in the public education system. It is necessary to create special conditions, improve the qualifications of teachers in the field of defectology, and adapt variable educational programs. This concerns teaching children with cerebral palsy, since these children are often deprived of full psychophysical and social development.

2. Problem Statement

To date, the organizational, pedagogical and methodological approaches to teaching English for children with disabilities have been poorly studied.

In this regard, the development of additional materials for teaching English for schoolchildren with disabilities, in particular, with cerebral palsy with preserved intellectual abilities, is of high relevance.

3. Research Questions

A thorough investigation of the problem addressed by the study revealed a number of contradictions between:

1) educational programs approved by schools and the lack of software and methodological support and standards developed for children with disabilities;

2) low motivation of students with disabilities (cerebral palsy with preserved intellectual abilities) to studying in general and increasing requirements for school graduates;

3) new objectives for organizing comprehensive and effective educational process faced by the teacher and the lack of necessary methods (techniques, technologies) in teaching children with special educational needs;

4) real pedagogical practice and the need for innovative activities of the teacher in organizing work with children with disabilities (cerebral palsy with preserved intellectual abilities);

5) the increased need of society for organizing the work with children with disabilities in English lessons and insufficient methodological, scientific, technological and organizational support in teaching foreign languages.

4. Purpose of the Study

The revealed contradictions and the insufficiently developed methodology of teaching speaking for children with cerebral palsy and other types of disabilities in English lessons determined the choice of the topic of our study: creating the conditions for effective teaching speaking for secondary school children with disabilities.

5. Research Methods

The methodological and theoretical basis of the study involved scientific and pedagogical studies of features of the development and learning of children with cerebral palsy (M.A. Zakharova, I.Yu. Levchenko, O.G. Prikhodko, V.A. Bronnikov), a communicative approach to teaching foreign languages (E.I. Passov, J. Harmer, I.L. Bim), the theory of speech activity (I.A. Zimnyaya), the theory of teaching foreign languages in educational institutions (N.D. Galskova, N.I. Gez, I.A. Bredikhina), and the works by A.N. Kornev, L.S. Vygotsky, S.V. Shatilov, A.N. Shchukin, Sk. Birkett

6. Findings

Speaking is one of the most difficult types of speech activity. Even healthy children experience difficulties in mastering speaking skills, which is, according to A.V. Konyushko, A.E. Dubina and S.A. Alexandrova, the weakest link in teaching foreign languages in secondary school (as cited in Konyushko, 2018).

Children with disabilities need active participation of defectologists, teachers and families. Teachers need to apply an individual approach to each child with such disabilities as cerebral palsy, to know its features and be aware of the specific problems of each disabled child to take all these into account when organizing education.

In the 5th grade, children with cerebral palsy with preserved intellectual abilities begin to actively study new vocabulary and create full-fledged statements, since by this time they begin to correctly compose phrases and sentences in a foreign language. Different tasks can be used to enhance memorizing new lexical units, which are needed to create a statement: for example, insert a missing word or a few words in a sentence (the task sounds like: fill in the word), find new words in the word snake, or the game 'snowball' can be used to revise new lexical units written on the card in addition to the words listed by classmates in the correct order, repeat the words after the teacher, arrange the English letters mixed together in the correct order to get the word (the task sounds like: unscramble the word) (Birkett, 2004; Sokolova & Plisov, 2019). The multiple repetition of the material leads to successful mastering of new lexical units. Due to the repetition of words in a variety of tasks, lexical units turn into the vocabulary that children with disabilities should actively use (Vodolagina, 2013).

The role of phonetic exercises should not be underestimated. Their main role in teaching children with disabilities is to develop their speech apparatus (Shamov & Kim, 2020). Due to phonetic exercises, it becomes easier for children to overcome the language barrier, which leads to the formation of correct communication skills in a foreign language, among which intonation and rhythm are of great importance. This helps children with disabilities to overcome embarrassment and actively use the facial and hypoglossal muscles to prevent the progression of dysarthria.

The use of health-preserving technologies in foreign language lessons is an integral part of every lesson in correctional schools. These technologies imply a rational organization of the teaching process with due regard to individual characteristics of each child, and the use of health-preserving technologies in English lessons is characterized by the absence of stress in children, and the adequacy of the requirements and teaching methods. In terms of health preservation, it is necessary to include physical

activity breaks in foreign language lessons conducted for children with disabilities (Makotrova, 2006). To have a prophylactic effect, physical activity breaks should include exercises for relaxation and tension for various muscle groups and exercises for increasing cerebral circulation (Palieva, 2012).

A great number of teachers consider an individually differentiated approach to teaching as one of the most effective when working with children with disabilities, since it is important to organize the teaching process with regard to individual psychological and physiological characteristics, and personal capabilities of each child. For example, it is extremely important for the teacher to take into account the pace of work of each child and even the time of maximum fatigue in order to correct the lesson plan if necessary. The preservation of the individuality of each disabled child, faith in his abilities, and the creation of the situation of success help the teacher develop the ability to learn English in children with disabilities, in particular, in children with cerebral palsy with preserved intellectual abilities.

It is also important to take into account the age of children with cerebral palsy. When teaching speaking foreign language in secondary school, it is necessary to:

- use the experience and knowledge of children with disabilities;
- include tasks related to the search, assessment, and assignment of information;
- change the types of activities and the pace of the exercises in the classroom, if possible;
- contribute to the development of targeted observation, the desire to highlight the main thing and mark strong points that facilitate memorizing and reproduction (Chelpanova, 2016).

When teaching speaking for children with cerebral palsy, it is important to create a positive and creative environment, since this is a mandatory condition for the transfer of knowledge from teacher to student. Communication and full-fledged dialogue can take place only in a friendly atmosphere of freedom and trust, and communication with children with cerebral palsy requires serious preparation and a positive emotional attitude of the teacher (Umerenkov, 2017). Depending on the abilities of one or another group of schoolchildren with disabilities and their diagnosis, the elements of problem learning technology can be applied in the classroom. According to Safonova (2001), the main task of problem learning is the development of the cognitive activity of schoolchildren through dialogization of the educational process. Increasing interest in learning English is one of the main factors that contribute to memorizing material.

When teaching speaking for schoolchildren with cerebral palsy, a variety of visual schemes, aids, tables, signal cards should be used. Any types of tasks should be accompanied by clear instructions and a step-by-step algorithm for the task completion. In addition, the teacher should give children with cerebral palsy more time to complete the task and provide the opportunity to correct the mistakes if required.

Pasenkova (2012) recommends using the following techniques:

- Reduce the amount of the vocabulary studied (try to select only the most widely used and significant lexical units).
- Select 'feasible' texts for reading and listening.
- Try to assess not only the results achieved by children, but also the personal and cognitive success, that is, the efforts and trials of each child, personal advancement, etc.

Khobrakova (2017) believes that it is especially important for disabled children to understand the outcomes at the end of the lesson. As a result, it becomes necessary to use adapted materials; provide clear and concise instructions, simple tasks; provide the possibility of movement during the lesson; use colored stickers, markers; use visual aids, etc. It is recommended to provide a step-by-step algorithm for the task completion and additional time to complete the task, and organize group presentation of the work.

Games in teaching English for children is an effective means for teaching children with LMS disorders, in particular, with cerebral palsy, therefore games are considered as one of the leading methods of teaching disabled children. This method enhances the developmental orientation of the teaching process in the classroom-lesson system and in extracurricular activities. Due to this, the process of foreign language communication approaches natural communication. The game promotes the development of mental and volitional activity (Gruzdeva et al., 2020; Konyshova, 2006). Communication-oriented games in English contribute to the development of children's skills in the dialogical and monological speech.

English lessons aimed at improving English speaking skills, which are based on the ESA model, can be interesting and informative (Boyle, 2010). The model was developed by J. Harmer in 1988 and still remains the main method of teaching English abroad. The abbreviation stands for *Engage. Study. Activate*, which is a combination of three stages of the lesson. The first stage is designed to motivate children, engage them and awake interest. It can be accompanied by various videos, pictures, soundtracks. The second stage focuses the attention of children on a particular language structure. The third stage encourages children to actively use the knowledge gained. In this case, it is important to create the situation of success for children with disabilities by encouraging each child's answer. This technique is suitable for teaching the monological and dialogical speech, since it employs a communicative approach that contributes to the formation of communicative competence in children, which, in turn, provides for the ability to use a foreign language in speaking (Passov, 1989).

Based on the methodology of A.V. Konyushko, A.E. Dubina and S.A. Aleksandrova, which employs the ESA model, we have identified a number of the following stages of teaching speaking for schoolchildren with cerebral palsy (as cited in Kornev, 2003):

- At the stage of engagement, from the very first minutes of the lesson, children should be encouraged to speak English. They may be asked simple questions: How are you getting on?, What is the weather like today?, Who is absent today?, which usually do not cause any difficulties and immerse children in the language environment. This task may be followed by phonetic exercises, as well as speech exercises, which will help children get ready for the lesson. It is possible to use rhymes, sayings, small proverbs. For example, phonetic exercises are effectively practiced using children's rhymes, tongue twisters. In addition, the teacher can prepare a presentation where children from different countries say the phrase being studied, including that presented by a native speaker, and the children should recognize the native speaker based on phonetics. Children should also try to repeat the phrase as close as possible to the original. Exercises of this type contribute to overcoming the language barrier and to formation of speaking skills, in which rhythm and intonation are of great importance. These

exercises can help a child with cerebral palsy develop a speech apparatus and overcome embarrassment.

- At the next stage, children study and revise new or learned material. Keeping the attention of children with disabilities is one of the most difficult tasks at this stage.
- The third and main stage is effective practice. With teaching speaking, it is necessary to jointly study the grammatical, lexical and phonetic material. At this stage, it is especially important to create the situation of success for children with cerebral palsy, while adhering to the scheme 'from simple to complex' (Grigorieva, 2013).

When conducting lessons for students with disabilities, it is important to use a variety of reflection elements at the end of each lesson: discuss what was new in the lesson, what children liked or disliked, what points they would like to discuss or revise, what tasks should be paid attention to next time. Children may be given 'mood cards', which reflect their emotional state before and after the lesson in the form of funny or sad emoticons. This technique helps the teacher assess whether it was possible to involve children in the process of foreign language communication or not (Vaganova et al., 2020).

The teacher should use various aids when teaching speaking in secondary school. These aids can be clichés for conducting a dialogue (motivation, questioning) and for a short monologue (useful phrases to start and end the monologue, plan for the monologue, unfinished but almost complete sentences, etc.). However, a child with this diagnosis, especially with the manifestation of concomitant diseases such as mental retardation will not be able to do the task even with all these aids. Such children need constant revision of the material. It should be noted that a calm atmosphere and constant overcoming of psychological and communication barriers contribute to a gradual improvement of the situation.

7. Conclusion

The conditions created for effective teaching speaking and the development of a set of exercises for teaching the monological and dialogical speech in English, which are included in a series of extended learning activities, have a beneficial effect on the development of speaking skills in schoolchildren with cerebral palsy with preserved intellectual abilities due to the effectiveness of the developed materials. We have found that the motivation for learning English among children with disabilities increases, and they show interest in mastering a foreign language. Each English lesson conducted for disabled children had a correctional focus. Teaching speaking for secondary school children with disabilities (cerebral palsy with preserved intellectual abilities) was found to be effective in a series of extended learning activities that include a set of exercises for developing the foreign language monological and dialogical speech based on a specially selected method of teaching a foreign language for this category of children.

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