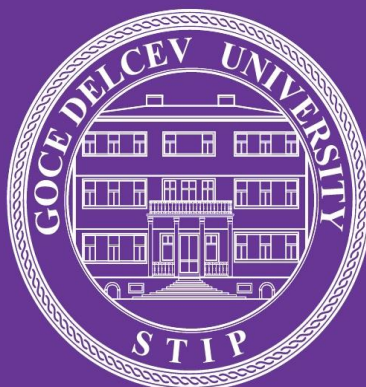


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THE COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND THEIR FORMATION IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Abstract: The formation of English language communicative skills in the primary education is a very thematic subject that has its particularities. In an early stage of the child's life, children accept their foreign language learning as a game, which implies a similar way of organizing the learning process to acquire knowledge and skills. It is curiosity that forces the elementary students to explore the reality of the environment, the objects and, with the help of the game, gain new knowledge. Children's communicative skills at this period evolve through simulations, role plays, songs, ready constructive phrases, and situations. A key factor in the level of learning remains the child's personal activity and engagement in the process. This provokes our search for opportunities to stimulate precisely this motivated activity.

Key words: communicative skills, methods of early language learning, interactive approaches to learning English, educational norms in foreign language teaching and learning

1. An introduction to the subjects of English language learning in the primary stage of education

The modern educational situation makes the acquisition of a foreign language, and in particular English, a key necessity. Knowledge of a foreign language is directly related to our highly developed technology society and its continuous globalization. Thus, mastering the language and introducing it into an initial training course, or even preschool is number one priority on a global level. The objectives of the curriculum and the training methods in the initial stage are: to build the basics of good communication skills in English as required by the state education system in the Republic of Bulgaria. This is strictly in line with the social and psychological skills of children at this early age. Among the main tasks of English language learning is building the ability of children to communicate at a multicultural level. This enriches the general culture and development of the students. **S. Halliwell** believes that the language personality of a child aged 7, 8 and over is fully developed in the native language. In the teacher's book on language learning in early stages in the first grades, he assumes on the fact that children come to school with a certain language base that the teacher has to develop. By the same logic, according to **Vigotski** in the early grades, the formation of communicative skills in the English language is of a reactive nature. That is, the foundations of abstract thinking and concepts of things are clearly outlined. According to the author, the strengths of the child in the native language are his weaknesses in foreign education. For example, in native language learning, grammatical forms are rather instinctive and innate, not acquired. In English learning, this is exactly the opposite - grammar is recognized from the stage of primary education.

The game is an important part of shaping English language communication skills in early stages of schooling because the process of learning a foreign language is long and complex. Children are easily distracted and tired,

and through games, they are diversified and more motivated and attentive. The type of learning activity needs to change frequently to stimulate the needed curiosity in children - and what is a better means than the game itself? **Schuyler** believes that pedagogical foreign language learning is ideally used by the children's eagerness in games for learning purposes. This strategy is as old as the pedagogy itself because it is always up-to-date and successful. In general, learning English at an early stage follows a specific program and learning content. Four types of skills are acquired, including speech, reading, writing and listening skills. However, in elementary English language schooling, speech and auditory skills play a major role in the process of language learning.

In Bulgaria, as early as the 20th century, the English language has been introduced in the elementary classes in the form of elective preparation for the second grade. In 2003, this training is mandatory due to the changes and needs of society. Education aims through the introduction of English as a compulsory subject, to develop a positive attitude towards language and to give children a new means of communicating. The formation of communicative skills is the educator's goal and he mainly develops children's oral speech regarding the English.

Umberto Eco says: "The laws of communication are laws of culture." And so the culture of behavior favors the development of communication skills. Therefore, the central place in studying English, at an early stage in school, is the "complex child's personality" - play, interactivity, communication. The language environment is natural to the child and instinctively acquire the foreign language rather than learning it - according to **S. Rangelov**.

A good foreign language teacher should be able to analyze pedagogical situations that inevitably arise during the class. He needs strategies and techniques of a diverse nature to provide an additional alternative and arouse a willingness to participate.

Referring to the work of a number of authors, **Pehlivanova** comes to the following conclusions about the formation of communicative skills in English:

- Children can learn to perfection a foreign language at an early age, thanks to the asymmetry of activity in the left hemisphere towards the right. If they do not learn perfectly the language, they will certainly build up very good intonation and speech skills for pronunciation.
- In studying and building up communication skills in English in the initial class, the comparison with native language is avoided and this significantly reduces the interfering influence.
- The game base of the initial English language course is not only communication but also voice thinking. This greatly facilitates training itself.
- The foreign language system is much easier for children in small classes because their concepts of native language are still incomplete.

2. Strategies and techniques for skills development, English communication in primary education and training.

Atanasova and Petrov define learning strategies as a "combination of skills, a set of procedures that learners consciously use in the context of a given situation to achieve a particular goal." In the didactics, science strategy is defined as a highly individualized way of using and organizing a set of certain training skills. In view of the very notion of strategy, namely the forming strategies for building communication skills in English, in the initial classes of education are varied. They may eventually be focused on the assessment of their own knowledge, ie metacognitive. They can be stimulating and encouraging, in the form of games, as a pedagogue tries to avoid the negative role of feeling in the child that is not doing well. Social and computational strategies are associated with group work and the use of non-verbal learning tools, while cognitive ones provide new information on an already existing old scheme. **Orlicz** thinks that the concept of the strategy includes within itself the methods, techniques and training procedures. The training principles consist precisely of training strategies and techniques. This is also the case with the learning of a foreign language. It comes to the conclusion that English language learning strategies depend on learning principles, which are based on learning objectives, pupils' age, and material content.

Basic principles of learning based on conscious learning, activity, system or accessibility for pupils, as well as principles of individual approach, a durability of the taught skills and knowledge are outlined. We also

recognize principles in forming communicative skills in English at the elementary school, led by complex, situational, intensive or intercultural. Basically, the principle of the advantage of oral speech in the introduction of new knowledge applies to foreign language learning at an early stage. In general, communicating with the primary school pupils is the very process of learning a foreign language. It is this bilateral communication that shapes the personality of the student in an individual way while motivating. The teacher communicates to provoke the interest of the child towards the foreign language, and the student communicates to get the answer to the curiosity the teacher has provoked in him.

With regard to learning techniques in building communication skills in English, we need to first explain what this "technique" is. A purely didactic training technique is a system of procedures based on learning rules to solve a given learning task. We recognize general and specific English language teaching techniques and not only. Thanks to the pedagogical techniques for forming English language knowledge, pedagogical strategies have been successfully implemented. Some well-known methods and techniques for pedagogical teaching in the early grades are the use of verbal expressive abilities of the learners, the use of the children's impulsive emotions, according to **M. Baeva**.

In conclusion, the approach, which is interactive, communicative and effective, is the most beneficial in the formation of communication skills in English, namely the initial training of students.

3. Language game, as a means of forming communicative skills in the English language, in the initial training.

According to the State Educational Requirements, at an initial stage of training, English language skills are limited to building the ability to communicate. Training through this system aims at forming, from an early stage of school development, in the student of linguistic, sociolinguistic, social and socio-cultural competences. In English language learning at an early school stage, there are no achievable upper limits, but only set goals to be reached. The process of the training itself is dynamic, the content is delivered in the form of role-playing and didactic games. By their nature, didactic games are an active learning activity that aims at mimic modeling. It is in the game that the child seeks to study and change the surrounding reality. Didactic games in English teaching give the student the necessary imagination, develop the thought and imperceptibly in the form of joyful emotion the student acquires certain foreign language skills.

The didactic game in the initial course has no definite place in the program. It can be placed at the beginning of a lesson or at the end of it. With it, one can learn new knowledge and communicative skills in English or to reinforce old ones. Unlike didactic games, role plays consist of three main points. They build up a communicative task and a situation where the participants have certain roles. It is the socio-role played by the participants in the game to strengthen and build mainly the formation of the communicative skills in English for primary school pupils. Unlike didactic games, roles have a definite place in the curriculum for initial English language learning. The main goal of the many role-playing games during the school year is the transition from prepared phrases and speech patterns to unprepared speech and spoken communicative situations.

In the role play, we can recognize three main moments - preparatory, a moment of implementation and final discussion. Language material is discussed in the initial stage of the game - words, expressions, grammatical rules. When performing the game, students are divided into groups and given roles. The pedagogue only makes minor adjustments and hints, the overall game is based on the roles of the students. In addition to role-playing and didactic games, creative games can also be included in the initial English language learning process. They somewhat resemble role-plays, but the students themselves create the themes and storylines of the games in the process of the game itself.

Main groups of games suitable for learning and building skills to communicate in English can be divided into structural, pronunciation games, vocabulary and spelling, and digits and letters. The game listen-do or see-do, read, write and similar themes that will entertain children and at the same time build up knowledge and skills in the language. Ultimately, the game is the way the teacher and students communicate fluently in a foreign language gradually without fear of failure or error. The children preoccupied in the game unnoticeably lose their barrier and feel at ease to communicate in the English language, which is required from them in the initial stage of learning.

4. **The development of communicative skills in English language acquisition in the initial training course - State Educational Framework in the Republic of Bulgaria and European Framework for Development.**

The foreign language education of children, and in English in particular, follows the regulation established by the State Educational Institutions, which is largely based on the European framework for the development of this training. It is therefore important to clarify the criteria of the Ministry of Education and Science regarding this training as well as the basis followed at European level.

The strategy set out in **the European School Framework** for early language learning aims to make "the obstacles to communicate - a source of enrichment and understanding". There are many practical seminars for teachers from different European countries, innovative language learning methods are offered, basic principles of modern language learning other than mother tongue. Since 2002, the European Council has introduced a resolution on multilingualism and learning. Thus, "language competence systems based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages" are created in the member states. That is why today the Bulgarian School has adopted the communicative model for learning English because it is presented by the Common European Framework of Reference. "Communication is the basic prospect of identifying knowledge and skills as well as the description of a language. It determines its level of proficiency. "Therefore, the pedagogical strategies are aimed at achieving a good communicative level in the students.

Stoycheva says, "The distribution and learning of an important document, as this one will bring an emphasis on European dimension in education." Thus, in Bulgaria, teaching English will follow the latest teaching trends practiced across Europe.

State regulation of education and the formation of foreign language communication skills in elementary schools - primary schools in the country follow the educational requirements formulated by the Ministry of Education and are subject to the State Educational Requirements. Regulation 2 on the curriculum, field - "Foreign Languages", aims at preparing students to communicate with people of other cultural communities. In addition, they must "learn to seek, discover and understand information from sources in a foreign language". The development of the most common communicative activity of students is the target for the study and teaching of English in primary school. State educational requirements also determine the appropriate level of foreign language proficiency.

The educational requirements for English language learning can be characterized in the following way: measurability of knowledge by setting up an adequate system for evaluating primary school pupils. The assessment system is formulated on the basis of specific skills acquired by the pupil during the foreign language training. Achievement is the second characteristic of state criteria for English learning. Here achievability measures the level of minimum degree and level of educational knowledge for the class. That is, at least 80% of the students in this age and class have to acquire the minimum of the given teaching material.

Among the peculiarities of the requirements in teaching and learning a foreign language, and in particular English, are also recognized the integrity and the interdisciplinary relations. In other words, the Foreign Languages area is developing in parallel and in close connection with the Bulgarian Language and Literature. In order to build their ability to communicate in English in the first stages of their education, students follow mainly the communicative approach of action and training.

5. **Conclusion**

Forming an ability to communicate in English in primary school children is a matter of organizational activity. It is expressed in the distribution of the functions of the educator who strives to create conditions for beneficial work in class. Overall, the communicative competence of students studying English in their initial education consists of three components - linguistic, socio-cultural and strategic. It is the compensatory strategies used by educators to solve a number of communicative problems in learning the foreign language. "These strategies, that contain language and non-language means, compensate for the imperfections of the language and provide a more relaxed environment for unforeseen situations." We can safely say that the early learning of a foreign language, and in particular the English language for primary classes, namely through a system of game forms and methods, provides the later conscious learning of the target language.

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