

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE FORMATION OF THE COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ENGLISH CLASSES

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Background: This study provides an analysis of the results of psychological and pedagogical experiment on the formation of language competence skills in primary school students at English lessons. Methods: The work shows the features of the experiment stages and describes the model of formation of linguistic competence skills. Results and Conclusions: The results of the psychological and pedagogical experiment showed that the linguistic competence skills formed more intensively in students of the experimental class than in the control class students.

Keywords: elementary class, English language, language competence, model, psychological and pedagogical experiment.

1 Introduction

Language is the main component of speech used for communicative and cognitive purposes. It is difficult to imagine the development and existence of human society without communication. In modern conditions, great changes are taking place in social relations, calling to improve the students' communicative and linguistic competence [1].

In all developed countries, learning a foreign language is an integral part of elementary education, which is aimed at the students' acquisition of the ability of intercultural communication [2].

It is a well-known fact that in a multilingual world, a foreign language is one of the important and relatively new subjects in the process of development of modern primary school children, which contributes to the formation of the student's communicative skills, general speech development and personal enrichment. One of the most important subjects of the school program is English language, which is a must-know language in this modern world.

As a school subject, English language has following features:

- It is an interdisciplinary subject (The content of speech in a foreign language can be the knowledge from various fields, such as literature, art, history, geography, mathematics, etc.);
- It is a multilevel subject (On the one hand, it is necessary to master various linguistic means, including lexical, grammatical, phonetic means, and on the other hand, one needs the skills in four types of speech activity.);
- It is a multifunctional subject (It can serve as the purpose of learning and as a means of obtaining knowledge in various fields of knowledge).

In addition, the role of any language is determined by its status in the state and society. Primary linguistic education manifests itself as a value in the state, society and individual's relation to it. Thus, from this point of view, we can talk about language education of primary school children as a state, social and personal value [3,4].

In accordance with the state obligatory standard of primary education, the main function of the subjects of "Language and literature" educational field involves the use of communicative approach aimed at the development of skills in four types of speech activity. The content of language subjects is aimed at developing students' interest and positive attitude to learning languages through play and cognitive activities, as well as at forming initial communication skills for exchange of information, ability to work with text as a speech material, understanding the meaning of phrases and expressions and using them in specific situations. That is, students should be prepared and able to communicate with native speakers, taking into account the limited speech opportunities and needs in oral and written forms of communication [5].

The object of research: the educational process in primary school. The subject of research: the process of formation of linguistic competence skills in primary school students. Aim of investigation: to determine the level of formation of linguistic competence skills in primary school students.

2 Methods

Based on the goal and objectives of the study, a sample of Almaty primary school was formed in accordance with inclusion and exclusion criteria.

A number of theoretical and empirical research methods were used to achieve the goal of the study.

The research material is based on statistical materials of psychological and pedagogical experiment. A comparative analysis of literature sources (psychological and pedagogical) and educational and methodical documentation was carried out during the research. An educational process in primary school and educational practice was analyzed and evaluated. On the basis of the developed model, a psychological and pedagogical experiment was conducted among Almaty primary school students.

Statistical processing of the obtained data was carried out on the basis of a set of modern methods of automated storage and processing of information in PC using MS Excel and «Statistica» software package.

The initial provisions for building the model were holistic, activity and person-centered approaches to the organization of the educational process.

In our opinion, integrity should correspond to objective logic of the formation of linguistic competence skills; it should be gradual, continuous, and should have phases (quantitative changes) and stages (qualitative changes).

Activity approach to building the models of formation of linguistic competence skills in primary schoolchildren was chosen due to the data established in national psychology, stating that the invariable basis for the development of a man as an individuality is the activity [6, p. 18].

The process of formation of linguistic competence skills is impossible without the account of the needs and capabilities of an individual in the process of education. The implementation of person-centered approach is based on pedagogical situation, actualizing the personal functions of students.

The developed model contains the following components:

- informative,
- operational,
- evaluative and effective,
- pedagogical conditions.

The allocated pedagogical conditions for the formation of language competence skills in primary school students should be realized in the aggregate [7,8].

The result of the investigated process is a high level of development of language competence skills, which ensures productive interaction with members of different culture in the learning process. Within the frames of evaluative and effective component, on the basis of the adequacy of the implementation of linguistic knowledge in receptive and productive types of speech activity, medium and high levels were identified.

At a low level of formation of language competence skills in primary school students at English lessons, students should be able to write all the letters of the English alphabet, they should know transcription signs, copy down a text; understand the teacher's speech, main content of easy texts; they should be able to ask simple questions from a partner, briefly talk about oneself, make small descriptions of objects, pictures following an example; read aloud small texts.

At a medium level, the students should aurally understand the main content of the small texts from audio recordings, read silently, understanding the main content of the text, find necessary information in the text; write greeting and short personal letters relying on an example; conduct a simple etiquettical dialogue, be able to tell about oneself, family, friends, describe the subject, picture at an elementary level.

At a high level, primary school students should be able to talk in standard situations of communication, ask a question from a partner and answer it, express own opinion, tell about oneself, family, friends; aurally understand the main content of announcements, native speaker's statements; read texts of different genres and understand their content, using bilingual dictionaries if necessary; fill out questionnaires, write congratulations, personal letters.

Research objectives

1. Acquisition of knowledge system in the field of foreign language necessary for communication.
2. Development and application of the formed key competences in receptive and productive types of speech activity, including reading, listening, oral and written speech.

Principles of research: scientific and systematic character, availability, consistency, and clarity of individual approach.

1) Informative component

1. Formation of key phonetic competence
2. Formation of key grammatical competence
3. Formation of key lexical competence

2) Operational component

1. Information-orientative phase
2. Transformative-correcting phase
3. Phase of activity

3) Evaluative and effective component

Integrative criterion: adequacy of realization of language knowledge in receptive and productive types of speech activity, including reading, listening, written and oral speech.

1. Low level of formation of language competence skills in primary school students at English lessons.

2. Medium level of formation of language competence skills in primary school students at English lessons.

3. High level of formation of language competence skills in primary school students at English lessons.

The final expected result: higher level of formation of language competence skills in primary school students at English lessons.

4) Pedagogical conditions

1. Management of cognitive activity of primary school students through individual and group collaboration;

2. Increasing interest and motivation to learn a foreign language;
3. Selection of culturological material.

All levels are uninterruptedly connected to each other. Each previous level is preparatory to the next level, and each of the subsequent levels invariably includes all the previous levels and qualitatively changes them. Based on the above, we provide the model of formation of language competence skills as a certain order of its stages, moving the students up to a higher level of their formation.

3 Results

The developed model was tested during the psychological and pedagogical experiment (2017–2018). Experimental work was carried out on the basis of secondary schools in Almaty. The experiment involved students of 3rd grade (N=127), including N=58 girls, N=69 boys.

Psychological and pedagogical experiment consists of 3 stages:

First – stating stage

At this stage, the control and experimental groups were determined. The purpose of this stage was to study and determine the level of formation of language competence skills in primary school students at English lessons.

At the initial stage, an interview was conducted, which helped reveal the level of students' knowledge. Knowledge of the alphabet, name of flowers, animals, and arithmetic skills were checked. Then the children were offered exercises and tasks, the purpose of which was to identify the level of students' knowledge in four types of speech activity (listening, speaking, reading and writing).

As a result of processing of the accomplished tasks and tests, the levels of students' acquisition of above aspects of language competence were revealed.

Second – formative stage

At the second stage of the experiment, a model of formation of language competence skills of primary school students at English lessons was realized. Formation of language competence skills, creative abilities, as well as the overall development of each student was the goal of the formative stage.

At this stage, the educational activities of primary school students were intensified in order to develop skills of language competence. The lessons included action games, visual material and handouts, songs and exercises, educational cartoons, dialogues and monologues in English.

To master speaking skills, a mini-performance in English was created. During the experiment, children learned songs, new words, phrases and sentences, which were then used in the musical performances.

At the lessons, children were provided with more visual material. In addition, thematic cards were used and attentiveness and memory games were played.

In order to improve the level of knowledge and skills in speech activity, particularly in reading, students were asked not only to read the text and understand its content, but also to answer interesting questions.

Also, in order to develop the writing skills, exercises for practicing grammar skills were used.

Apart from exercises and tests for the development of listening skills, the children were shown an educational cartoon in English. Students of the 3rd grade watched the cartoon, got acquainted with new vocabulary, reinforced previously learned material, and also aurally perceived foreign speech.

After watching the cartoon or listening to stories, students were asked questions about the content of the cartoon or text to determine whether they understood the meaning and content of foreign speech.

In addition, it was found that there were children in the groups, who had low motivation to learning English. They were inattentive, did not show interest in the subject or had quickly vanishing interest.

However, most of the students were interested in learning English. They sang songs with pleasure, participated in all the performances and games in foreign language. In a casual conversation, some shared their dreams about their future profession. There were students among them who plan to connect future profession with a foreign language, for example, to become an English teacher at school or to be a traveler.

The developed model included active ways of organizing the educational process, modern approaches and pedagogical conditions, which, in case of effective interaction, contribute to the motivated and effective acquisition of a foreign language by primary school students.

Table A. Relative share of formation of language competence skills in primary school students

Aspects of linguistic competence	Beginning of experiment (P%±m%)		End of experiment (P%±m%)	
	Control group	Experimental group	Control group	Experimental group
Listening	42.6±1,0	50.5±1,2	43.6±1,0	78.5±3,6
Speaking	50.7±1,2	54.3±1,3	46.7±1,0	79.3±3,8
Reading	51.2±1,2	50.0±1,2	48.2±1,0	77.8±3,5
Writing	53.5±1,2	48.3±1,0	51.4±1,2	76.9±3,2
Level of statistical significance ($p < 0.0001$)				

The results confirm that the students of the experimental class develop language competence skills more intensively compared to the students of the control class. Thus, students of the experimental class are much more interested in learning a foreign language ($F_{cr}=6,268$). Accordingly, there is a positive dynamics of development and formation of communication skills among the students of this group.

Third – control stage

At this stage, the tasks and tests aimed at identifying the level of students' knowledge in four types of speech activity were re-applied. The analysis of tasks at the beginning and the end of experimental work allowed to establish that results of formation of language competence skills in primary school students of experimental group surpass results of the control group.

Thus, relative share of formation of language competence skills in primary school students at the beginning of the experiment in the control group on listening was 42.6% and increased by 43.6% by the end of the experiment.

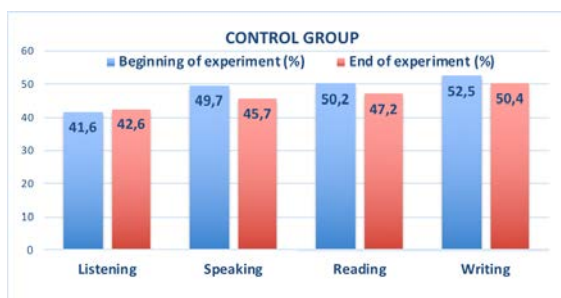


Figure A. Relative share of formation of language competence skills in primary school students of control group.

While on the other three indicators of the aspects of language competence the group shows a decline, i.e., speaking was 50.7% and it decreased to 46.7%, reading was 51.2% and it decreased to 48.2%, and writing was 53.5% and it also decreased to 51.4% (Table A, Figure A).

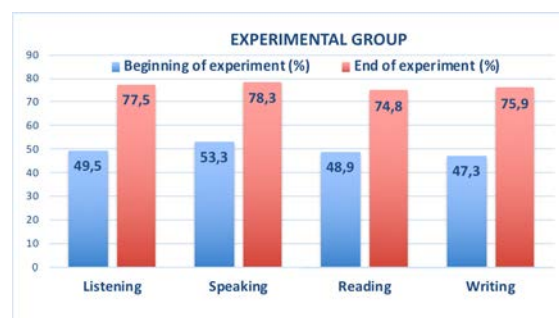


Figure B. Relative share of formation of language competence skills in primary school students of experimental group.

As for the indicators of the linguistic competence aspects of the experimental group, we see a positive development. Thus, at the beginning of the experiment relative share of formation of language competence skills on listening in primary school students was 50.5% and it increased to 78.5%, on speaking it was 54.4% and it increased to 79.3%, on reading it was 50% and it increased to 77.8%, on writing it was 48.3% and it also increased to 76.9% (Table A, Figure B).

The results of this work let record qualitative and quantitative changes in the degree of formation of language skills in primary school students. The analysis and generalization of the results obtained in the course of the experiment showed that the methods of language activities used in the classroom let us better study individual students, awaken their interest in learning, achieve absolute contact in interaction with primary school students, create an atmosphere of goodwill and active creative work, ensure active participation of each student.

To teach children communication, it is necessary to form and support their motive of communication. Therefore, everything should be motivated at the lessons, including the perception of educational material, and transition from one activity to another, one type of speech exercise to another.

3 Conclusion

In conclusion, results of formation of language competence skills in primary school students of experimental group surpass results of the control group. Thus, during repeated exercises in the experimental group, speaking improved by 25%, listening improved by 28% ($p < 0.0001$). In addition, there is an improvement in reading by 25.9%. Writing skills improved by 28.6% by the end of the experiment ($p < 0.0001$).

While implementing models of formation of primary school students' linguistic competence skills, it was revealed that it is necessary to include activities like watching cartoons in English, listening to authentic text, action games, exercises with elements of foreign language speech, visual handouts, cards into lessons. This model helped to improve primary school students' language competence skills at English lessons.

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Primary Paper Section: A

Secondary Paper Section: AM