

METHODOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING SPEECH IN EARLY AND PRESCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

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Abstract. This article examines the methodology for developing speech in early and preschool-aged children. It focuses on effective pedagogical and psychological methods that support language acquisition through play, storytelling, and communication activities. The importance of a rich language environment and early intervention in fostering children's speech and cognitive development is also highlighted.

Keywords: speech development, early childhood, preschool education, language acquisition, communication skills, pedagogy, early intervention.

In the "Ilk Qadam" (First Step) State Curriculum, the development of speech in early and preschool-aged children is considered one of the most essential components of competency-based education. Among the general key competencies of children at this stage, communicative competence occupies a leading position. It involves the ability to use various means of communication effectively across different situations. Thus, alongside play, cognitive, and social competencies, communicative competence is central to the holistic development of preschool children.

Accordingly, in preschool education institutions, one of the main objectives is to ensure the effective development of children's speech and communication skills through every educational and upbringing activity. When children acquire new knowledge through play-based and didactic activities, the level of efficiency is significantly higher. For instance, rather than simply reading traditional folk tales aloud, applying innovative educational technologies during storytelling sessions enhances each child's speech development process and contributes to improving the overall quality of education.

To achieve this, it is essential to develop and actively implement modern technologies for speech development in early and preschool-aged children. The formation of speech at this stage is both a crucial and complex process. Successfully addressing this challenge is vital not only for preparing children for school but also for helping them communicate freely and confidently in society.

Children of early and preschool age primarily learn the names of objects, phenomena, qualities, and relationships that are visually represented or directly involved in their activities. This can be explained by the visual-active and visual-imaginative nature of their thinking. As a result, abstract concepts are almost absent in their vocabulary, which must be considered during the learning process. Therefore, when designing the content of preschool education, educators should employ non-traditional teaching methods, use integrated visual and distributive materials to increase engagement, and consider the cognitive characteristics of each age group. Speech development in preschoolers also requires interdisciplinary cooperation among specialists such as speech therapists, defectologists, psychologists, educators, and parents. The development of a child's thinking is closely interconnected with speech formation, as thought is a product of

language. Hence, teachers must consider several factors during the teaching process, including the child's age characteristics, individual abilities, personality traits, and external influences (family, peers, and educational tools).

From a grammatical perspective, speech development in early and preschool-aged children is a gradual process—from simple to complex, from lower to higher levels—where quantitative changes lead to qualitative transformations. Teaching the native language and developing speech are among the core priorities of preschool education, as they aim to ensure children's mastery of oral speech in accordance with the norms of literary language, facilitating understanding and active communication. However, communication difficulties often arise when parents do not know how to establish effective dialogue with their children. This lack of verbal interaction negatively affects the child's emotional and cognitive development. Collaboration between teachers and parents is therefore crucial to addressing this issue comprehensively. The development of communicative speech in children is closely linked to their activity and interaction with others. As they grow, children gradually begin to understand and reproduce the structure and meaning of words, sentences, and short texts.

During this period, speech evolves from situational to non-situational forms of communication, transitioning from practical interaction to reflective and personal communication. This transformation demands new qualities and competencies in children's speech, making it a key tool for establishing social connections. For this reason, internal speech and the ability to engage in monologic expression must also be nurtured. Ultimately, speech should become an instrument of thought.

One of the most important factors in speech development is creating a favorable communicative environment that encourages children to participate actively in verbal exchanges. Speech is the primary means of interaction with the external world, and frequent communication with adults is essential. Since imitation is the foundation of language learning, adults should speak clearly, expressively, and regularly with children, describing daily routines and surroundings to reinforce vocabulary and understanding.

Developing children's speech requires a systematic and planned approach. For example, educators can use greeting games, such as "Hello, Children!", to teach social interaction while ensuring speech remains expressive, grammatically correct, and emotionally engaging. Using literary works, rhymes, and short folk verses during routine activities—such as table manners, hygiene habits, or bedtime routines—not only builds independence but also enriches vocabulary, memory, imagination, and overall fluency.

Speech development generally follows two main directions:

1. Improving speech comprehension, and
2. Developing children's active speech production.

At the same time, teachers must also support respiratory control, auditory perception, imitation, and fine motor skills. For instance, using ribbons, paper planes, bubbles, or flowers during breathing exercises, and engaging in finger games, puzzles, and sensory play (with sand or water), all enhance physical and linguistic coordination.

Innovative methods—such as drawing on transparent boards, rhythmic speech games using “Su Jok” balls and rings, and storytelling with magnetic picture boards—make speech activities more dynamic and enjoyable. For example, instead of merely retelling a story, children can play “Find the Right Picture,” arranging images in sequence, which fosters active verbal reasoning and creativity. Furthermore, the educator’s role should evolve from that of a dominant narrator to an observer and facilitator, creating space for children’s independence and verbal initiative. Encouragement of children’s expressive attempts opens the way to speech fluency and confidence. When choosing innovative methods, special attention should be given to technologies that develop communication skills and speech culture, not just passive listening.

Modern preschool education faces growing challenges as the number of children with speech delays increases. Studies indicate that around 58% of preschoolers and 56% of first graders exhibit various speech development difficulties. This trend is influenced by environmental factors such as media exposure, digital communication, and bilingualism, which have reshaped language standards. Therefore, the educator’s role in fostering correct and rich speech has become more critical than ever. Traditional teaching approaches are no longer sufficient to meet the needs of modern society. Contemporary teachers, speech therapists, and psychologists must utilize innovative pedagogical methods and technologies tailored to each child’s linguistic, emotional, and cognitive profile. Only through such comprehensive and interactive strategies can the speech development of early and preschool-aged children be effectively supported and sustained.

Conclusion

Speech development in early and preschool-aged children is vital for their overall growth. The "Ilk Qadam" State Curriculum highlights communicative competence as the core of child development. Using innovative methods like play-based learning and storytelling fosters speech and cognitive skills. Collaboration among teachers, therapists, and parents is key to creating a supportive environment for language growth. In conclusion, prioritizing speech development in preschool education ensures children’s future success and social adaptation.

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