

## Section 6. Pedagogy

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### FORMATION OF A PRESCHOOLERS' COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE WHEN LEARNING ENGLISH IN THE PROCESS OF PLAY ACTIVITIES

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#### Abstract

This article is devoted to the disclosure of theoretical and practical aspects of the development of a preschooler's communicative competence in the process of learning English through play activities. In this article we will discuss features of preschool age, the role of play in learning a foreign language, as well as specific methods that contribute to the formation of communication skills.

**Keywords:** *globalization of society, informatization of society, language abilities, communicative competence, interpersonal communication, intercultural communication, teaching methods, natural language environment, learning process*

#### Introduction

The modern world requires a person not only to speak their native language, but also to be able to communicate effectively in foreign languages. In the context of globalization and informatization of society, learning English is becoming not just a desirable, but a necessary skill. Increasingly, parents and teachers are realizing the importance of starting learning a foreign language early, since preschool age is the most favorable period for the formation of language abilities. The child's brain has a unique plasticity during this period, which allows him to easily learn new sounds, words and grammatical structures.

However, the key goal of learning a foreign language at preschool age is not so much to master grammar or an extensive vocabulary, but rather to develop communicative competence. Communicative competence is the ability and willingness to carry out interpersonal and intercultural communication in a foreign language with native speakers, as well as to use a foreign language as a means of learning about the world and self-expression. For preschoolers, this means the ability to understand simple English, respond to it, and express their thoughts and desires at a basic level in situations appropriate to their age.

Traditional teaching methods aimed at schoolchildren often prove ineffective for toddlers. Preschoolers learn through action, exploration, and most importantly, through play. Play is the leading activity at this age, a natural and organic way of learning about the world and developing all mental processes. That is why play activity becomes a central element in the process of developing a preschooler's communicative competence when learning English. It allows you to create a comfortable, motivating and natural language environment in which the child does not feel pressure, but perceives the learning process as an exciting adventure.

The concept of "communicative competence" is one of the key concepts in modern methods of teaching foreign languages. It was introduced into scientific use by the American linguist Dell Hymes in 1972 as a response to the limitations of purely linguistic competence (knowledge of the rules of language). Hymes argued that it is not enough to know grammar and vocabulary for effective communication; it is also necessary to understand how and when to use language in various social contexts. In the context of learning a foreign language, communicative competence includes several interrelated components:

**Linguistic Competence:** Knowledge of linguistic units (phonetics, vocabulary, grammar) and the rules of their functioning. For preschoolers, this means recognizing and reproducing basic sounds, words, simple phrases, and sentences.

**Sociolinguistic Competence:** The ability to choose and use linguistic means in accordance with the communication situation, the social status of the interlocutors, their roles and cultural norms. For example, knowing how to greet an adult or a peer, how to ask for something politely.

**Discourse Competence:** The ability to make coherent and logical statements, understand and create texts (in this case, short dialogues, simple stories). This is the ability to connect sentences into a single whole, to maintain a conversation.

**Pragmatic Competence:** The ability to use language to achieve specific communicative goals (for example, to ask, offer, thank, express agreement/disagreement).

**Strategic Competence:** The ability to use different strategies to compensate for insufficient knowledge or skills in the communication process. For example, to ask again, to use gestures, facial expressions, to simplify a statement.

**Features of preschool age and learning a foreign language.** Preschool age (from 3 to 7 years old) is a unique and critically important period in a child's development, which has a significant impact on the process of learning a foreign language. Understanding these features allows teachers and parents to build effective teaching methods.

The sensitive period for language acquisition: Preschool age is considered the sensitive (most favorable) period for language acquisition. At this time, the child's brain has high neuroplasticity, which allows him to easily learn the phonetics, intonation and rhythm of foreign speech, as well as form new neural connections responsible for language functions. Children are able to imitate sounds and accents much more accurately than adults. The main activity is play: Play is the main way for preschoolers to explore the world. Through play, the child learns social roles, develops imagination, emotional sphere, fine and large motor skills, as well as cognitive processes. Learning embedded in play activities is perceived by the child naturally, without coercion and stress. Involuntary attention and memory: Preschoolers' attention and memory are predominantly involuntary. This means that the child remembers information better, which causes him an emotional response, is interesting and is included in active activities. Monotonous exercises and cramming are ineffective.

Visual-imaginative thinking: A preschooler's thinking is visual-imaginative. He needs to see, touch, and act with objects in order to understand and remember information. The use of visual aids (pictures, toys, gestures, facial expressions) is a prerequisite for successful learning. Emotionality: Preschoolers are very emotional. Positive emotions contribute to a better assimilation of the material and the formation of a stable interest in the language. Negative emotions, on the contrary, can cause rejection and block the learning process. Fatigue and the need to change activities: Children quickly get tired

of monotonous activities. Classes should be short (15–25 minutes), dynamic, with frequent changes in activities (singing, moving, playing, drawing).

**The need for movement:** Preschoolers needs constant movement. The inclusion of physical activity (physical training, outdoor games) in the learning process not only relieves stress, but also promotes better memorization of vocabulary and phrases. **Egocentrism:** In the early stages of preschool age, children focus on themselves. It is important that the language material is related to their direct experience, interests and environment. **Imitative learning:** Children learn language by imitating adult speech. It is important that the teacher or parent be a model of correct and clear English speech for the child.

### Results

Given these features, it becomes obvious that learning English at preschool age should be as close as possible to the natural process of mastering a native language – through immersion in the language environment, repeated repetition in various contexts, active interaction and, of course, through play.

#### ***The role of play activities in English language teaching***

Play is not just entertainment, but the leading activity of a preschooler, his main way of learning about the world, development and self-expression. In the context of learning a foreign language, the game acquires special importance, becoming a powerful tool for the formation of communicative competence.

**Naturalness and organicity:** Play is a natural environment for a child. He feels comfortable, free and safe in the game. Learning embedded in the game is perceived as a continuation of natural activities, and not as a forced occupation. This reduces the psychological barrier and fear of mistakes.

**Motivation and interest:** The game is inherently exciting. It arouses the child's keen interest, curiosity and desire to participate. During the game, children are ready to make efforts, repeat the material repeatedly, without noticing fatigue. The positive emotions associated with the game contribute to the formation of a sustained interest in the English language. Creating a natural language

environment: The game allows you to simulate real-life situations in which language is used to achieve specific goals. In the game, the child does not just memorize words, but uses them to communicate, express their thoughts, requests, and emotions. This contributes to the formation of situational and contextual memory.

**Development of all components of communicative competence:**

**Linguistic:** Repeated repetition of vocabulary and grammatical structures in game situations helps to consolidate them.

**Sociolinguistic:** Role-playing teaches the use of language in accordance with social roles and situations.

**Discursive:** Games that require building dialogues and short stories develop the coherence of speech.

**Pragmatic:** Goal-setting games (for example, “find an object”, “ask for directions”) teach you how to use language to achieve specific goals.

**Strategic:** During the game, children learn to overcome communication difficulties using the means available to them.

**Removing the psychological barrier:** In the game, the child is not afraid to make a mistake, as it is perceived as part of the gameplay, and not as a failure in the lesson. This creates a favorable atmosphere for experimenting with the language.

**Development of involuntary attention and memory:** Due to emotional involvement in the game, information is absorbed involuntarily and remembered more firmly. **Integrated development:** The game promotes not only language, but also the general development of the child: it develops imagination, thinking, memory, attention, fine motor skills, social skills, emotional intelligence. **Enabling Movement:** Many games involve physical activity, which meets preschoolers' need for movement and helps relieve tension.

Thus, the game is not just a methodical device, but a fundamental principle of organizing English language teaching at preschool age. It allows you to make the learning process exciting, effective and as close as possible to the natural process of language acquisition.

The development of a preschooler's communicative competence when learning English

in the process of play is one of the most promising and effective areas in modern preschool pedagogy. The unique features of preschool age – sensitivity to language, the leading role of play, involuntary attention and memory, emotionality – dictate the need to build the educational process on the principles of naturalness, fascination and activity. The game, being an organic form of cognition of the world for the child, acts not just as a methodical device, but as the foundation on which the entire process of mastering the English language is built. The effectiveness of the process is significantly increased if the subject-development environment is competently organized, rich in visual, audio and game materials that stimulate the child to use English independently. Monitoring and evaluation of the development of com-

municative competence in preschool age are informal, based on systematic observation of the child in natural play situations and aimed at supporting his progress, rather than strict control.

Thus, the purposeful and systematic use of play activities in the process of learning English at preschool age allows not only to lay a solid foundation for further language education, but also contributes to the harmonious development of the child's personality, the formation of his cognitive interests, social skills and self-confidence. The early start of learning English through play opens up new opportunities for preschoolers to communicate and explore the world, making them more open and ready for the challenges of modern global society.

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