



Games As a Teaching Method

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ABSTRACT

The article presents the basic methods of teaching a foreign language to preschoolers and discusses the importance of applying educational games in the teaching process. The study reveals the factors of creating favorable conditions for mastering language and speech skills.

Keywords:

Teaching, Foreign Language, Preschool Education, Educational Games, Associative Method, Communicative Method, Audio-Lingual Method, Audiovisual Method, Immersion Method.

Over the past few years, learning a foreign language has become a necessity rather than a way of personal development. A foreign language has become a compulsory component of education not only in schools and universities but also in many additional preschool institutions.

The demand for a foreign language in society and the understanding of parents that language is not only a factor in educating a modern man but also the basis of his social and material well-being in society makes early learning of a foreign language especially popular and important today. About 20 years ago knowledge of the language was only required in jobs in certain fields, but now it is necessary to have at least one foreign language.

The main problem of teaching a foreign language is the age of the student. Until recent years, the teaching method was mainly aimed at school-age children, but now parents tend to start involving their children in learning a foreign language as early as possible. The main goals of teaching a foreign language to preschoolers are:

- formation of children's primary communication skills in a foreign language;
- the ability to use a foreign language to achieve their goals, express thoughts and feelings in real situations of communication;
- creating a positive attitude to further study of foreign languages;
- arousing interest in the life and culture of other countries.

Preschool age is especially favorable for the beginning of learning a foreign language: children of this age are particularly keen on language learning, they have a great interest in understanding speech experience. A child of this age absorbs everything like a sponge and easily remembers new information, which is another factor proving that it is the best time to learn a language, particularly English. Not only do they easily and firmly remember a small amount of language material, but also reproduce it well.

Teaching kids is a very difficult task, which requires a completely different methodological approach than teaching schoolchildren and adults. If an adult speaks a foreign language, this does not mean that he can teach others. Faced

with methodically helpless lessons, children can permanently acquire an aversion to a foreign language, lose confidence in their abilities. Only experienced specialists should work with preschoolers.

During English classes children gradually develop the basics of communicative competence, which at an early stage includes the following aspects:

- the ability to correctly repeat English words from a phonetic point of view after a teacher, native speaker, or speaker, that is, the gradual formation of auditory attention, phonetic hearing, and correct pronunciation;
- mastering, consolidating, and activating the English vocabulary;
- mastering a certain number of simple grammatical structures, building a coherent utterance.

The methodology of conducting educational activities should be based on the age and individual characteristics of the structure of children's linguistic abilities and should be aimed at their development.

Basic methods of teaching children a foreign language are as follows:

1. Associative method.

This method is perfect for children because of their wide imagination. Its essence is that the studied phrase or word is associated with some very vivid image or a picture. That is, by memorizing the word "apple", they represent a delicious juicy apple. Subsequently, a vivid image makes it easy to find the right word in memory.

2. Communicative method (lexical approach).

This is a method of learning a language through communication, discussion – so children gradually learn to think in English. Teachers can discuss how the day went, how interesting a new book or movie was, where they went on the weekend. In this way, children learn phrases and expressions that can be easily used in a speech later.

3. Audio-lingual and audiovisual methods

With the help of these methods, oral speech can be practiced effectively. They are based on interesting dialogues and by learning

them, children easily learn to speak. In this method, children watch movies, listen to songs, which gives them a good opportunity to perceive the original English speech.

4. Immersion method

The best way to apply the method is to communicate with a native speaker who can not answer in the mother tongue of children. The immersion method teaches to think in English – a good and advanced skill that will be very useful in the future.

Communicating in a foreign language should be motivational and purposeful. It is necessary to create in the child a positive psychological attitude to speech in a foreign language, and the best way to create such a positive motivation is a **game**. The game is both a form of organization and a method of conducting classes, where children accumulate a certain stock of English vocabulary, learn a lot of poems, songs, counting books, and so on.

This form of teaching creates favorable conditions for mastering language skills and speech skills. The ability to rely on gaming activities allows teachers to provide natural motivation for speech in a foreign language, making even the most elementary statements interesting and meaningful. The game in teaching a foreign language is not opposed to educational activity but is inextricably connected with it.

Games in educational activities should not be episodic and isolated. There is a need for a cross-cutting game methodology that combines and integrates other activities in the process of language learning. The game methodology is based on the creation of an imaginary situation and the adoption of a particular role by the child or teacher.

Educational games are divided into **situational, guessing, competitive, rhythmic-musical and artistic games**.

Situational games include role-playing games that simulate situations of communication on a particular occasion. Role-playing is a game activity in which various life situations are played out and children act in certain roles. For example: a seller and a buyer, a doctor and a patient, an actor and his fan, etc.

They, in turn, are divided into games of a reproductive nature, when children reproduce a typical, standard dialogue, applying it to a particular situation, and improvisational games that require the use and modification of various models.

Guessing games. Guessing games are engaging and they make children think, which is the ideal way to practice key vocabulary and grammar. "Guess Who?", "Guess My Job", "Guess What I Bought" and other similar games are good examples of guessing games. In this type of games, a teacher or a child describes an object or a person by using appropriate words as well as gestures and pantomime. By way of illustration, in the game "Guess What I Bought" the teacher tells the class that he went shopping yesterday and that children must guess what he bought. The teacher describes each object in terms they can understand: "It's warm. It's brown. You put it on your head (it's a hat)".

Competitive games. Most games that promote the acquisition of vocabulary and literacy are competitive. The winner is the one who has a better command of the language material. These are all kinds of crosswords, board and print games with linguistic tasks, and the execution of commands. Crosswords can be on any topic: animals, fruits, vegetables, furniture, toys, etc. The teams are different. In the classroom, children can play the game: "Simon says" - the goal of this game is to develop cognitive interests. The children stand next to the teacher. The task of the children is to follow the teacher's commands. For example: "Hands up! Sit down! Jump! Run!" In the course of this game, the lexical material of various topics is widely used.

Rhythm-music games are all kinds of traditional games such as round dances, songs, and dances with a choice of partners, which contribute not so much to mastering communication skills, but to improving the phonetic and rhythmic, and melodic sides of speech and immersion in the spirit of the language, for example: "Nuts and May", "What's your name?," "I like my friends", "Head, shoulders, knees and toes", etc.

Artistic or creative games are a type of activity that stands on the border of play and

artistic creativity, the path to which lies for the child through play. They, in turn, can be divided into:

1. *Dramatizations*, namely, small stages. "In the forest" - for example, a fox and a bear meet in the forest, and a small dialogue is played out (Hello! I'm a fox. I can run. I like to fish); "Little Red Riding Hood" and others.

2. *Pictorial games*, such as graphic dictation, picture coloring. Picture coloring is a calming, not always meaningful, but a very common activity. While the child is engaged with drawing something, the teacher repeats the words and calls the details of this picture. Graphic dictation - for example: in the classroom, the children are told what color the thing is, they paint it, and then compare the resulting images with the one dictated by the teacher.

Games with cards are very popular among young learners due to their clarity and stimulation to the child's imagination. They make it easier to learn the language and boost vocabulary replenishment by combining vision, pronunciation, repetition, and consolidation as well. The following classes are most effective:

1) *Naming the item shown on the card.* The teacher shows the card, names the object depicted on it, and passes it to the children, each of them must repeat the specified word, and then send it to the next participant. For beginners, it is enough to simply name an object or animal, if the lesson is not the first, the process can be complicated by pronouncing not a word, but a construction containing it;

2) *Describing the picture from the card.* This stage involves the presence of certain vocabulary and level of language proficiency. For example, if the picture shows a dog, the word dog can be added to the description of what it is -black dog, big dog, funny dog. Of course, new words should be learned earlier, cards in this case help to consolidate the material and be able to use the learned vocabulary in practice;

3) *Seeing which picture is missing.* Here, along with language skills, attention is trained. The pictures are fixed on the board or stand, the children turn away, after which the teacher removes one or two of them. The task of the

children is to name, in English, of course, what has disappeared from their field of view.

Since the visual channel of perception is dominant in the majority, the use of flashcards in training is extremely effective.

In conclusion, there are several methods of teaching a foreign language to young learners, especially preschoolers. Considering the playfulness and active behavior of preschoolers, these methods are usually applied by using games in the teaching process. A game is an activity focused on the zone of immediate development, combining a pedagogical goal with an attractive motive for the child's actions. Games do not only support the interest and initiative of children but also introduce them to this multi-faceted and multilingual world. This approach to language learning will help to raise a proactive and independent child who can become a successful person in the modern world.

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