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THE FORMATION OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN PRIMARY-SCHOOL LEARNERS IN L2 LESSONS THROUGH DRAMA

The changes in the education system of Ukraine have provided the importance of developing student's competencies. The new paradigm shift represents the importance of teachers being guided to using a competence-based approach. The New Ukrainian School (NUS) faces the task of equipping children with key life skills like communication in foreign languages. This lays the foundations for the methodology of teaching a foreign language as it takes a 21st-century teacher to instruct a 21st-century learner. That will help us to ensure using innovative techniques for developing students' communicative skills in primary school. One of the most effective methods of developing CC in primary-school students is considered to be drama which allows unobtrusively preparing the psyche of children for the many social roles they will have to live in society. That's why our article aims to disclose the specific features of communicative competence in L2 in the NUS; describe the psychological factors of speech development; and identify the benefits of using drama as a relatively new means of teaching speaking in L2 lessons.

The Concept of NUS is a leading reform in the educational system of Ukraine in the 21st century. The sense of curriculum updating is based on moving away from "knowledge" pedagogy to lifelong learning and the formation of key life competencies. The list of competencies that students will acquire is already enshrined in the Law on Education. It was created taking into account the "Recommendations of the European Parliament and of the Council of Europe on the formation of key competences for lifelong learning" (18.12.2006). In these Recommendations, J. Borrell and J.-E. Enestam define competences as a set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes relevant to the situation. The scholars state that basic competencies are those that are needed by all citizens for personal implementation and development, active civic life, social unity, and employment opportunities [1].

According to the Concept of NUS, the key competencies connect the personal and social in education, reflect the complex mastery of a set of activities, which creates the preconditions for developing indicators of their measurement; they are not identified in general but in a particular case or situation; they are acquired not only during the study of subjects but also by means of non-formal education, environmental impact, etc. The new Law on Education anticipates the formation of ten key competencies, among which the leading one is the communicative competence (CC). The competence-based approach to teaching L2 encourages the teacher to develop the primary-school students' CC in L2 as one of the main factors in learners' educational and cognitive activity and their self-realization in society. The scientists determine competence as a dynamic combination of knowledge, ways of thinking, views, values,

skills, proficiencies, and other personal qualities that determines an individual's ability to perform professional and/or further educational activities successfully.

The CC in L2 is defined as an ability to understand adequately concepts expressed in a foreign language, to express both in speech and in writing the ideas, thoughts, feelings, facts and views by listening, speaking, reading and writing in a broad range of societal and cultural contexts. It is determined as skills of direct activity and intercultural communication in education, at work, at home, and during free time [2; 10-11]. The NUS requires new approaches to teaching L2 to students and forming their competence of communication in foreign languages. In this manner, we should pay attention to the psychological factors of speech development in primary-school students.

The current system of learning involves the diverse use of teacher-student communication through language, which places high demands on the development of children's language. At the age from 6 to 10 years old, primary-school learners are mastering the sound composition of words, vocabulary, the grammatical structure of language, understanding of literary language and mastering the written language. Speaking develops both during spoken interaction and spoken production. At the beginning of schooling, the child already has a certain vocabulary and language grammar. The learner begins to consciously relate to his speech, thinks about the correct construction of the utterance, selects the appropriate word form and intonation. As the child learns to read and write, the vocabulary grows, the functions of speech are enhanced, its syntactic structure is improved.

The success of pupils' speech development depends on a number of factors. The first factor that influences pupils' speech development is the need for communication. Therefore, the methodology of speech development should include situations that determine the motivation of speech and put the student in front of the need to speak correctly, provoke his interest and desire to share something.

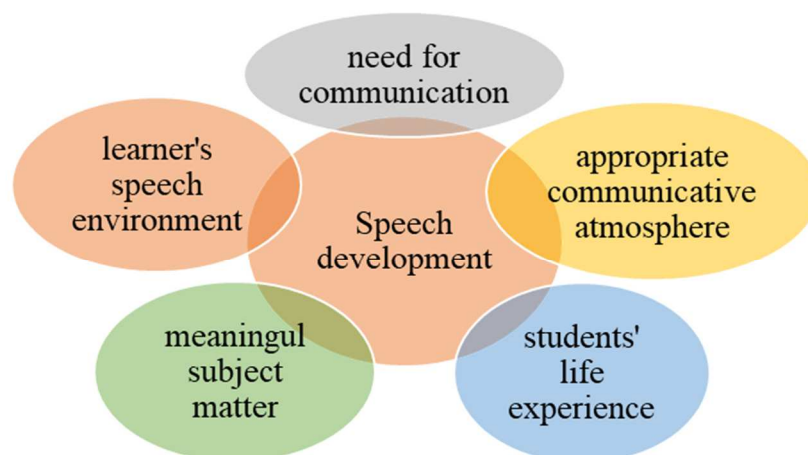


Figure 1. Factors of Speech Development

However, communication is possible only through conventional signs, that is, words, their conjunction and different turns of speech. Therefore, teachers need to submit speech patterns or create an appropriate communicative atmosphere. The richness, variety, and correctness of his or her own speech depends largely on the

learner's speech environment. This is the speech of parents, relatives, friends, folklore, fiction, radio and television, cinema and theater and the language of textbooks.

Wealth, accuracy, content of speech depends on the enrichment of the child's consciousness with different ideas and concepts, from the life experience of the student, the amount of his knowledge. The learner can talk well or write about what he knows well. In addition, the subject matter of the conversation should be meaningful to him. It is also an important factor in the development of learners' speech. Learners' full speech development can only be ensured by a well-planned system for the development of broadcasting which clearly dispenses material: vocabulary, syntax, speech, forms the ability to build coherent pronunciations.

Therefore, paying attention to learners' psychological characteristics will facilitate the development of students' communication skills. An important task is to form the ability to apply the acquired knowledge, methods of action, experience in new non-standard situations in order to solve life problems. Taking into account the theory of multiple intelligences, we tend to emphasize the role of drama as a means of developing CC. We believe that a person should feel psycho-physical freedom, have a well-developed attention and imagination, be able to communicate, organize themselves for action - these are indicators of a creative personality. Drama provides learners' involvement in creativity, in which they acquire acting experience, including improvisation, which provides the development of a child's emotional intelligence, creative thinking, self-awareness and self-efficacy, the ability to mobilize others, initiative, ability to overcome the barriers, uncertainty, and risk to collaborate with others [4; 16]. In this regard, the problem of developing the communication skills of younger learners by modeling various communication situations and selecting appropriate communication strategies deserves special attention.

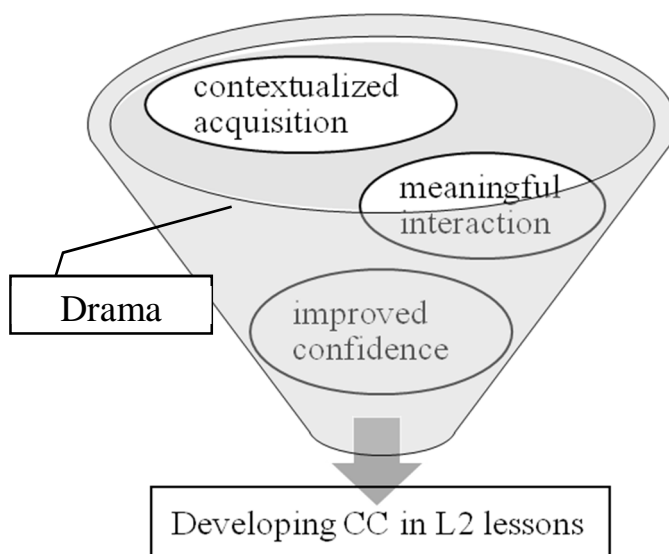


Figure 2. Benefits of Using Drama in the Classroom

Using drama in L2 lessons makes it possible to gradually overcome the difficulties in the level of speech development, to cause children to wish to inform something, to express their opinion and to show their vision of the world - so there is a desire to learn independently. We are convinced that the use of this method contributes to creating for

learners' multiple opportunities for discovering and improving their abilities; approaching real life; building up confidence; competition with oneself, developing a sense of responsibility.

Drama puts the teacher in the role of supporter in the learning process and the students can take more responsibility for their own learning. Ideally, the teacher will take a less dominant role in the language class and let the students explore the language activities. In the student-centered classroom, every student is a potential teacher for the group. For example, we can use the activity "Who am I?" - learners work in pairs to represent the characters on a particular page in their book. Each pair shows their mime to the rest of the class, who guess the characters and try to remember what they were saying at the time. Another example of using drama in L2 lesson can be the activity "What am I telling you?" - two children mime a dialogue and the other children guess what they could say. For example: the communicative situation "In a restaurant":

- Are you ready to order?
- Yes, I would like to have pasta and a salad, please.
- Anything to drink?
- Orange juice, please. [5; 14, 22]

With the view of considered issues of developing primary-school learners' CC in L2, we have come to the conclusion that diverse drama techniques assist in developing such elements of CC as fluent communication in L2 due to solving the life-problem situations, as well as learners' interactive skills that develop while cooperation in a role-play. The third aspect is the ability to express one's emotions, thoughts, feelings orally and non-verbally and understand others. The perspectives of our research are to examine the role of drama as a means of developing communicative competence in L1.

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