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ROLE-PLAYING AS AN AFFECTIVE METHOD FOR DEVELOPING PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' FOREIGN LANGUAGE DIALOGIC COMPETENCE

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Abstract. *The relevance of the study is due to the fact that, according to the NUS concept, foreign language learning is considered one of the priority areas of educational policy in Ukraine. Mastering a foreign language means being ready to solve social language situations and being competent in real-life foreign language communication. Therefore, mastering foreign language dialogic speech is a key goal of teaching foreign languages to primary school students. In accordance with the age peculiarities of primary school students, game, especially role-playing game, is an effective method of developing foreign language dialogic competence.*

The purpose of this paper was to consider the methodology of using role-playing games for the development of foreign language dialogic competence of primary school students. The authors set the following tasks: to consider the methodology of developing primary school students' foreign language dialogic competence; to disclose the peculiarities of using role-playing games in teaching a foreign language to primary school students; to present an illustrative example of a role-playing game effective for using with primary school students.

The study used theoretical research methods, namely, the method of critical analysis of scientific literature was used to analyze scientific literature on the problem under study and to define the main methodological categories of the research; the method of studying and generalising the positive experience of using role-playing games to develop primary school students' foreign language dialogue competence was also used.

The authors characterised the essence of foreign language dialogical competence and considered the peculiarities of teaching foreign language dialogical speech to primary schoolchildren. It was found out that primary school children have virtually no intrinsic need to learn a foreign language.

Therefore, it is important to create conditions in the classroom under which students would have a motive and a natural desire to say something, to convey their feelings.

The study determined that a role-playing game is a well-organised and controlled situation close to the real one, in which students perform various imaginary roles to solve a real problem in a safe classroom environment, using a foreign language. An example of a role-playing game on the topic «Family Tree» was presented.

The article concluded that the use of role-playing games is an effective method of primary school students' foreign language dialogic competence development, provided that it is carefully prepared and the recommendations for its implementation are followed at all stages: before, during and after the game. The study of the problem of training future primary school teachers to teach a foreign language using role-playing games may be a promising area for future research.

Key words: foreign language dialogic competence, role play, primary school students, foreign language, dialogic speech.

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РОЛЬОВА ГРА ЯК ЕФЕКТИВНИЙ МЕТОД ФОРМУВАННЯ ІНШОМОВНОЇ ДІАЛОГІЧНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ УЧНІВ ПОЧАТКОВОЇ ШКОЛИ

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Анотація. Актуальність дослідження обумовлюється тим, що, відповідно до концепції НУШ, вивчення іноземної мови вважається одним з пріоритетних напрямків освітньої політики в Україні. Володіти іноземною мовою означає бути готовим до її використання в різноманітних ситуаціях реального іншомовного спілкування. Тому формування основ іншомовної діалогічної компетентності є ключовою метою навчання іноземних мов молодших школярів. Відповідно до вікових особливостей учнів початкової школи гра, особливо рольова гра, є ефективним методом формування іншомовної діалогічної компетентності.

Метою дослідження було розглянути методіку використання рольової гри для формування іншомовної діалогічної компетентності молодших школярів. Авторами поставлено наступні завдання: розглянути методіку формування іншомовної діалогічної компетентності молодших школярів; розкрити особливості використання рольових ігор у навчанні іноземної мови молодших школярів; представити ілюстративний приклад рольової гри, ефективною для роботи з учнями початкової школи.

У роботі використано теоретичні методи дослідження, а саме, метод критичного аналізу наукової літератури з досліджуваної проблеми для визначення основних методологічних категорій дослідження, а також метод вивчення та узагальнення позитивного досвіду використання рольових ігор з метою формування іншомовної діалогічної компетентності учнів початкової школи.

Охарактеризовано сутність іншомовної діалогічної компетентності, розглянуто особливості навчання іншомовного діалогічного мовлення молодших школярів. Встановлено, що діти молодшого шкільного віку практично не мають внутрішньої потреби вивчати іноземну мову. Тому важливо створювати на уроках умови, за яких в учнів буде виникати мотив і природне бажання щось сказати, передати свої почуття.

З'ясовано, що рольова гра представляє собою добре організовану і контрольовану ситуацію, наближену до реальної, в якій учні виконують різноманітні уявні ролі для вирішення реальної проблеми в безпечному середовищі класу, використовують при цьому іноземну мову. Наведено приклад рольової гри на тему «Родинне дерево».

Підсумовано, що використання рольової гри є ефективним методом формування іншомовної діалогічної компетентності молодших школярів за умови її ретельної підготовки та дотримання рекомендацій щодо її впровадження на всіх етапах: до, під час та після проведення. Дослідження підготовки майбутніх учителів початкової школи до навчання іноземної мови з використанням рольових ігор може бути перспективним напрямком майбутніх досліджень.

Ключові слова: іншомовна діалогічна компетентність, рольова гра, учні початкової школи, іноземна мова, діалогічне мовлення.

Introduction and current state of the research problem. Teaching foreign languages is an important component of building a modern education system in Ukraine. In the Concept of the New Ukrainian School the ability of school students to communicate in foreign languages is emphasized as one of the highest priorities of the educational policy. Mastering a foreign language means being ready to solve social language situations and being competent in real-life foreign language communication. So, it is crucial to focus learning activities on communication. School students acquire basic knowledge of a foreign language and speech skills in primary school. Therefore, mastering foreign language dialogic speech as the main form of oral communication is a key goal of teaching foreign languages to primary school students.

The need to maintain learners' interest in studying languages and to diversify the learning process leads teachers to search for different teaching methods and tools and to improve them. Taking into account age peculiarities, a game is a natural activity of children aged 6 to 11, who study in grades 1-4. At the same time, it is an important activity for junior students that promotes personality-oriented learning, forms cognitive skills, initiative, critical thinking, and the desire for cooperation. A role-playing game is an effective and efficient method of teaching dialogic speech. Role-playing provides free space for interpersonal interaction, maximum involvement of each student in the process of speech, and the ability to practice the language in a safe school environment.

The purpose and objectives of the study. The purpose of this paper is to consider the main methodological aspects of using role-playing games for the development of foreign language dialogic competence of primary school students.

The objectives of the work are: to consider the methodology of developing primary school students' foreign language dialogic competence; to disclose the peculiarities of using role-playing games in teaching a foreign language to primary school students; to present an illustrative example of a role-playing game effective for using with primary school students.

Research methods. In this work the method of critical analysis of scientific literature is used – to analyze scientific literature on the problem under study and to define the main methodological categories of the research; the method of studying and summarizing the positive experience of using role-playing games in the class is used – to provide an example of an effective role-playing game.

The statement of the main material research. The review of the relevant scientific literature has shown the growing attention of national researchers and teachers to teaching foreign languages to young learners. Different aspects of the problem of developing elementary school students' foreign language dialogic competence has been studied by such Ukrainian and foreign scientists as O. Bihych, O. Kotenko, S. Nikolaieva, V. Redko, S. Roman, I. Samoiliukevych, S. Shevchenko, J. Anderson, C. Livingstone, L. Schiffler, J. Scrivener and others. The studies of the use of role-play in teaching English were presented by T. Arntsena, A. Bell, E. Harbour, J. Connick, and others.

According to S. Nikolaieva et al. dialogic competence is the ability to realize oral communication in a dialogic form in areas and situations of communication that are vital for a certain age in accordance with the communicative task [1, p. 302]. Dialogic competence implies the ability of a speaker to plan, implement and correct his / her own communicative behaviour when generating and varying foreign language speech in different types of dialogic utterances in accordance with a particular communication situation (context), speech task and communicative intention and according to the rules of communication in a particular national and cultural community. Knowledge, skills, and communicative abilities are the components of dialogic competence.

The study of methodological sources has shown that the development of junior pupils' foreign language speech takes place through imitation of the exemplary teacher's (speaker's) speech, reproduction of speech patterns, explanation of grammatical constructions through introduction of them to the situation of speech (implicitly), and memorization of speech patterns with their subsequent use in communicative situations created in class [2, p. 79].

The current foreign language curriculum for grades 1-4 is based on a communicative approach to teaching foreign languages. Teacher's awareness of the psychological and pedagogical foundations of teaching foreign languages to junior schoolchildren provides more opportunities for students to master the necessary knowledge, skills and abilities. For example, teachers should take into account the fact that for younger students in Ukraine learning English may not have any obvious practical benefit. Firstly, they have very few opportunities to use English outside of the classroom. Secondly, students have limited exposure to English-speaking culture, most often through a distorted lens like TV or music. Thus, younger schoolchildren have virtually no intrinsic need to learn a foreign language. Therefore, effective lesson planning is crucial. Much attention should be paid to the choice of methods of teaching, which should be interesting, varied, and motivating to communicate [5]. It is important to create conditions under which students would have a desire and need to say something, to convey their own feelings. A positive psychological climate in the classroom, friendly relations, and interest in the activity will motivate English language communication in the class.

Concerning the issue of essence of dialogic speech, it is stated that it performs some communicative functions, which include the following ones:

- 1) request for information – provision of information,
- 2) proposals (in the form of a request, order, advice) – acceptance/rejection of the proposals,
- 3) exchange of judgments/opinions/impressions,
- 4) mutual persuasion/justification of one's point of view.

Each of these functions has its own specific linguistic means and is dominant in the respective type of a dialogue [1, p. 304].

As for its structure, any dialogue consists of separate interrelated statements or replicas of the participants. A replica is the first element of a dialogue. Replicas can be of different lengths, from one to several phrases. In a dialogue, they are closely related to each other in terms of their communicative functions, structure, and intonation.

The initial unit of teaching dialogic speech is dialogic unity. Dialogic unity is a set of replicas characterized by structural, intonational and semantic completeness. Depending on the main communicative function performed by a particular dialogue, functional types of dialogues are distinguished. The results of studies conducted on authentic English language teaching materials have shown that there are four main types of dialogues: inquiry dialogues, agreement dialogues, exchange of impressions/opinions, discussion/debate dialogues.

Primary school students' foreign language dialogic speaking skills are developed step-by-step as they complete a special system of exercises. Three stages can be distinguished in teaching foreign language dialogic speech in the classroom:

1. mastery of certain dialogic unities, which consist of initiating and responding remarks;
2. mastery of a micro-dialogue, which is considered as a means of expressing the main communicative intentions of the participants of communication;
3. independent composing of their own dialogues in English by primary school students (the actual dialogue (extended dialogue) consists of two or three micro-dialogues) [1, p. 319].

The foreign-language dialogic speech of primary school students is two-way, that is students take turns playing the roles of a speaker and listener, and they should respond adequately to their partner's remarks. Therefore, dialogic speech involves students' mastery of speaking and listening, which requires bilateral speech activity and initiative from the participants of communication.

An important feature of primary school students' foreign language dialogic speech is the use of "ready-made speech units", the so-called "formulas, templates, clichés", which add emotionality to the dialogue. They are used to express gratitude, exchange greetings, attract the interlocutor's attention at the beginning of a conversation, comment on what they have heard, etc.

Role-playing can be defined as a well-organized and controlled close to real-life situation where students take on imaginary roles to solve a real-life problem in a safe environment of a classroom. Role-playing is a very important technique in teaching speaking because it gives students an opportunity to practice communicating in different social contexts and in different social roles. Role-playing involves the distribution of roles among students and acting out communication situations according to a given topic and roles of the students. These roles can be performed by individual students, in pairs, or in groups which can play out a more complex scenario [7].

An obligatory element of the role play is solving a problem situation. Therefore, role-playing motivates students' speech activity, as they find themselves in a situation where they need to say something, ask, find out, prove, express their point of view, share certain information with the interlocutor, etc. The search for a solution to the problem leads to natural communication. Thus, role-playing games help to develop students' communication skills. Namely, such abilities as to communicate with each other on everyday topics to fulfil their needs; to start and finish a conversation; to maintain a conversation; to agree/disagree with the opinion of the interlocutor/ interlocutors; to choose language tools according to the situation; to present and defend their own point of view; to listen purposefully to the interlocutor; to have communication strategies (to use speech and etiquette forms; to be able to express gratitude, requests, consent, disagreement, objections, etc.).

Incorporating role-playing into the classroom adds variety, a change of pace and opportunities for a lot of language production and also a lot of fun. But the activity should be properly organized. As A. Bell states, designing a role-playing activity for an EFL classroom, a teacher should keep in mind the following important things:

- the activity needs to have clear aims based on which elements of the language the teacher wants their students to practice;
- the context for a role-playing should be clearly presented to the students. This might mean presenting the situation students are pretending to be in, or even using props to help immersion and encourage committing to the role;
- students might need to be acquainted with specific unknown vocabulary used in the role-play;
- the participants should be introduced to the roles they will be playing. This can be done through simple verbal explanations to role cards with role-specific details (which should be brief and precise);
- after a role-play is finished it would be useful to discuss its results and students' feelings [4].

The success of the role-playing game requires certain preliminary preparations on the part of the teacher and students. A role-play needs to have clear learning objectives, encourage spontaneity, maintain motivation, activate background knowledge and involve all students [6, p. 5]. A foreign language teacher should know that each role-play needs to be approached differently. In some role-plays, learners are given some information about a "role" (either a person or a job title). This information is given on "role cards", which may contain your name, job, age, personal appearance, clothes, your character, interests, etc.

Alternatively, "the role cards" could offer guidance as to what to do rather than the role itself, e.g. *Go to the greengrocer's and buy a kilo of tomatoes. Complain that the lemons don't look fresh enough. Find out if there are seedless grapes.* Learners take a little preparation time and then meet up with other students to act out small scenes using their own ideas and information from the role cards.

With most role-plays, it makes sense to teach and provide some controlled practice of the language that students will need. The teacher should take a moment before any role-play to make sure students understand what the task entails. This can be done using concept check questions. For instance, after students see the instructions and get their own card, ask them: *How long do you need to talk for? How many topics do you need to talk about? How many follow-up questions do you need to ask?* [8].

At the end of the activity the teacher should get some feedback from the learners on their participation. The teacher's task is also to try to take notes while students are doing

the task so that to be ready to tell them what their strengths were after the role play is done. The teacher can also ask them to correct some of the mistakes they made (without pointing fingers). If the students do a role-play twice, it's probably better to provide feedback after the first fulfillment so that they make fewer mistakes on the second try.

Examples of role-playing games for primary school students include the following ones: *Guess what I have. Free time activities. Interviewing famous people. At the greengrocer's / supermarket. Meeting a new friend from Great Britain. A tour guide. In a space ship* and etc.

Here is an example of a role-play which is called "Family Tree". The aim of this role-play is to practice grammar structures "Have you got a mother (father / sister / brother / cousin / aunt / uncle)?", "What is his/her name?", "How old is he / she?", "What is your name?", "How old are you?". Each student is looking for family relations. He / she gets a card with a description of his or her relationship with various others in the class who have similar cards. For example, if there are 10 students in the class, you must prepare 10 cards which may contain the following information:

Card #1: You are John, 10 mother Ann, 35 father Jim, 39 sister Samanta, 14 brother Sam, 4 aunt Kate, 29 cousin Mike, 6 grandmother Chloe, 53 grandfather Nick, 57	Card #2: You are Kate, 29 son Mike, 6 husband Jake, 33 mother Chloe, 53 father Nick, 57 sister Ann, 35 niece Samanta, 14 nephew John, 10 nephew Sam, 4
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The other 8 cards include the information according to the person they correspond to. Students circulate, asking each other questions, until they find their relatives. You should write the key questions on the board to provide the students with support at the beginning of the role-play. Be sure that very soon they won't need this visual aid. Students tend to get very involved in this activity. In larger classes, you can add interest by developing the activity so that there are two families in the class. Students must find their own family members [3, p. 47-48].

Conclusions and perspectives of further researches. The analysis of scientific research has shown that role-playing game gives students a real purpose for communication and helps them to develop speaking fluency and accuracy, provided that it is thoroughly prepared and recommendations for its implementation are followed at all stages: before, during and after the game. The research proves that the use of role-playing games is an effective method for developing primary school students' foreign language dialogic competence. The research on the preparation of prospective primary school teachers for teaching English using role-playing games may be a promising direction for future studies.

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