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Elementary level of communicative competence as the aim of teaching English at preschool stage

Article is devoted to studying of the concept «elementary level of communicative competence» on the basis of the international classification of levels of proficiency in English and the standard training program of preschool institutions of the Republic of Kazakhstan. As a result of comparison of these documents was given the definition of a concept and offered the description of elementary level of communicative competence in preschool organizations of Kazakhstan. On the basis of contradiction, found in the standard program and the international requirements to training in English at this step, the content of training in English in preschool institutions providing not only qualitative results of training, but also preparation for assimilation of the school program.

Keywords: elementary level of communicative competence, preschool education, levels of proficiency in English.

*Take care of the first two stages
and the rest will take care of itself.*

G. Palmer

Introduction

Introduction of trilingual education in elementary school is reasoned by the experimental data of modern science demonstrating intensity of informative processes of formation of language competence at school students of elementary grades. Besides especially didactic aspect, trilingual program forms feeling of the invariance and firmness of ethnic characteristics, psychological and intellectual openness to other languages and cultures in the identity of school students that is an important element in education and training of younger generation in the modern globalized world. Implementation of the trilingual educational program meets priorities of language policy in RK and is aimed at formation of polylingual culture of the modern citizen of Kazakhstan. Practice of teaching languages at elementary school confirms high extent of assimilation of a foreign language and formation of motivation to further studying of languages [1].

Since 2016 studying of English is obligatory also at a preschool stage in quality of training of children to successful assimilation of the school program. According to the research conducted among elementary school teachers only of 4,5 % of respondents have expressed negative attitude to early preschool training in English [2]. However, as the researchers conducted in preschool educational institution of the Karaganda region at this grade level have shown results to language there is a number of problems, such as lack of qualified personnel, lack of unified methodical base and didactic providing [3]. The problem of ensuring continuity of programs of preschool and school training in English is also relevant and requires the solution, so currently programs are completely duplicated.

Proceeding from the foresaid, an attempt to determine the content of training in English at a preschool stage, by studying the international classification of levels of proficiency in English and to give definition to the concept «elementary level of communicative competence» is made.

An attempt to create classification of levels of proficiency in a foreign language has been made by foreign scientists within activity of the Common European Framework [4]. Initially the problem consists first of all in determination of amount of level categories. If to use a small amount of level categories, then the accuracy, validity of determination of level of proficiency in a foreign language will be sacrificed to reliability. More flexible approach to allocation of so-called conventional levels was required. Many systems of levels are focused (in the practical purposes) on three main levels:

- elementary;
- intermediate;
- advanced, which can be subdivided to sub-levels depending on the aim of level definition.

As a result, appeared six levels where each of three main shares on one more advanced and one less advanced, in comparison with basic level of possession of language. The following levels concern them: 1. A1 - Breakthrough. 2. A2 - Waystage. 3. B1 - Threshold. 4. B2 - «Threshold advanced» (Vantage). 5. C1 - «High» (Effective Proficiency). 6. C2 - «Language proficiency in perfection» (Mastery).

Each of these six levels costs above or below the corresponding classical division into basic, intermediate and advanced levels. Specialists of the Council of Europe have offered the terms designating three main categories of the user of foreign language such as: «A» - Basic User, «B» - Independent User and «With» - Proficient User that assumes broader understanding of each of three main levels. It can be presented in the form of the following scheme:

A		B		C	
Basic User		Independent User		Proficient User	
A1	A2	B1	B2	C1 (Effective Proficiency)	C2
(Breakthrough)	(Waystage)	(Threshold)	(Vantage)		(Mastery)

Method

Allocation of levels in the system of mastering foreign-language communication is extremely important as it shows dynamics of formation of speech and educational and speech actions by each type of speech activity not only within one level, but also between them; allows to operate training; gives to the teacher and students an opportunity to depart from concrete material of a certain year of training and to study a foreign language at speed, the most acceptable for specific collective or certain pupils (to reduce/increase training terms).

The system of levels of proficiency in a foreign language is closely connected with the control system, estimates and self-assessments of level of formation of foreign-language communicative competence. And if language competence and also abilities of reading and audition can be estimated depending on percent of correlation of a task to total assessment, then to assessment of speech and sociocultural competence there can't be «a formalistic approach with samples» [5]. Qualitative criteria are necessary. The scales consisting of the description of foreign-language knowledge, skills and abilities within this or that level can be those. To each type of foreign-language communicative competence there corresponds the level to proficiency which differs on final purposes. Proficiency level (the planned result) is a purpose projection to the content of training and assumes accounting of conditions of training.

The similar system of levels of proficiency in English at the age of 5–12 has been developed for students by the center of qualification of the Cambridge university and includes 3 levels Pre A1 Starters, A1 Movers, A2 Flyers which correspond to the levels pre A1, A1 CEFR. The expected results of training according to levels, are presented in the Table.

Table

The expected results of levels of proficiency in English at the age of 5–12

Pre A1 Starters	
1	1
Listening and Speaking	Reading and Writing
CAN understand letters of the English alphabet when heard CAN understand some simple spoken instructions given in short, simple phrases CAN understand some simple spoken questions about self – such as name, age, favourite things or daily routine CAN understand some very simple spoken descriptions of people – such as name, gender, age, mood, appearance or what they are doing CAN understand some very simple spoken descriptions of everyday objects – such as how many, colour, size or location CAN understand some very short conversations that use	CAN read and understand some simple sentences, including questions CAN follow some very short stories written in very simple language CAN write the letters of the English alphabet CAN write name using the English alphabet CAN copy words, phrases and short sentences CAN spell some very simple words correctly

1	1
familiar questions and answers CAN name some familiar people or things – such as family, animals, and school or household objects CAN give very basic descriptions of some objects and animals – such as how many, colour, size or location CAN respond to very simple questions with single words or a ‘yes/no’ response	
A1 Movers	
CAN understand very simple spoken dialogues about familiar topics with the help of pictures CAN understand very simple spoken descriptions about people and objects CAN express agreement or disagreement with someone using short, simple phrases CAN respond to questions on familiar topics with simple phrases and sentences CAN give simple descriptions of objects, pictures and actions CAN tell a very simple story with the help of pictures CAN ask someone how they are and ask simple questions about habits and preferences	CAN understand some simple signs and notices CAN read and understand some short factual texts with the help of pictures CAN read and understand some short, simple stories about familiar topics with the help of pictures CAN write short, simple phrases and sentences about pictures and familiar topics CAN write simple sentences giving personal details CAN write short, simple sentences about likes and dislikes
A2 Flyers	
CAN understand instructions given in more than one sentence CAN understand simple spoken descriptions of objects, people and events CAN understand simple conversations on everyday topics CAN ask basic questions about everyday topics CAN tell short, simple stories using pictures or own ideas CAN give simple descriptions of objects, pictures and actions CAN talk briefly about activities done in the past	CAN understand simple written descriptions of objects, people and events CAN understand simple, short stories containing narrative tenses CAN read and understand short texts, even if some words are unknown CAN link phrases or sentences with connectors like ‘and’, ‘because’ and ‘then’ CAN write simple descriptions of objects, pictures and actions CAN write a short, simple story using pictures or own ideas

As it was told above, the-level system is connected with the control system, i.e. the assessment system of formation of foreign-language communicative competence. It is possible to distinguish the following from the criteria allowing to evaluate level of language proficiency:

- the correctness of lexical and grammatical, intonational and syntactic and phonetic execution of the foreign-language speech;
- the acceptability and expediency of the used strategy of speech behavior;
- the ability to communicative partnership;
- the communicative expediency of use of language means of execution of the speech;
- the acceptability of language means and speech behavior in the sociocultural plan;
- the existence of sociocultural awareness on the country of the learned language [5].

Considering the questions connected with the assessment system of foreign-language knowledge, skills and abilities (definition is more whole, contents, a format of examinations, evaluation criteria), it is necessary to consider both the international standards of level of proficiency in a foreign language, and the modern domestic requirements presented in training programs and textbooks on a foreign language. In other words, all components of foreign-language communicative competence have to become subject to control. In view of stated (characteristics of component structure of foreign-language communicative competence, experience

of development of new models of control), it is possible to allocate the parameters and criteria necessary for assessment of level of formation of foreign-language communicative competence of trainees.

The concept «competence» accepted by scientific community thanks to works of the American linguist N. Chomsky (1972) is used in teaching language methodology when determining the common and private goals and the content of training. One of the values of the term competence recorded in dictionaries is area of questions in which someone is well informed, has knowledge, experience on which someone has good knowledge [6]. In modern methodical science the communicative competence when training in a foreign language is a set of knowledge of the system of language and its units, their construction and functioning in the speech, about ways of formulation of thoughts in the learned language and understanding of judgments of others, about national and cultural features of carriers of the learned language, about specifics of various types of discourses; it is ability learning language his means to carry out communication in different types of speech activity according to solvable communicative tasks, to understand, interpret and generate coherent statements.

The leading for a modern methodology of teaching foreign language is the communicative competence which includes:

- linguistic (language);
- speech (sociolinguistic);
- discursive, strategic (compensatory);
- social (pragmatical);
- sociocultural;
- subject;
- professional competences.

In the model offered by Common European Framework in foreign-language communicative competence are allocated:

- language;
- pragmatical;
- sociolinguistic competences.

The fullest and functional model, in our opinion, is the communicative competence model offered by V.V. Safonova that consists from:

- language;
- speech;
- sociocultural, including sociolinguistic, subjective, common cultural and lingvocultural competences.

The formation of foreign-language language competence is one of problems of language training of pupils at all steps of education. From among the components of language competence allocated by V.V. Safonova [7] in the conditions of preschool education, according to us, it is necessary to create the following knowledge:

- about alphabetic structure of language;
- about creation of a simple sentence
- about creation of a question

Results

High level of language competence doesn't provide efficiency of speech interaction of participants of communication according to V.V. Safonova. Therefore formation and improvement of language competence need to be carried out in a complex with speech and sociocultural [7]. The foreign-language competence assumes ability to consider communication conditions (a situation, the communicative purposes, intentions, social and functional roles of participants of communication) and according to them to choose a necessary language form and a way of expression of the thoughts, creating own variant of foreign communicative competence [8].

To the main components - for the conditions of preschool training it is possible to carry the following to the main components:

- to recognize lexically and grammatical acceptable statements in a foreign language aurally;
- to distinguish letters aurally and visually;
- to describe objects and actions by 1–2 phrases.

The sociocultural competence includes:

- knowledge of rules of speech and nonverbal behavior in a new sociocultural context;
- knowledge of realities of foreign-language culture which can occur in authentic texts and movies.

Discussion

The offered classification describes the elementary level of communicative competence representing set of the language, speech and sociocultural components corresponding to psychological development of children 5–7 summer age, forming the basic knowledge about language and culture allowing to carry out elementary communication (to define a subject and action, to give the characteristic, to ask a question) on the subjects falling within the scope of their interests and motivating to further acquisition of a foreign language.

Thus, the purpose of training in a foreign language of preschool children is formation of elementary level of communicative competence at the level, available to him, of main types of speech activity: audition, speaking. Development of writing skills and reading is also relevant for this stage, but at a stage of writing and recognition of letters and short words.

Conclusion

The elementary communicative competence is understood as ability and readiness of the preschool child to carry out interpersonal and cross-cultural communication in a foreign language in a limited circle of the typical situations and spheres of communication available to the child. Therefore, the learning of foreign language in kindergarten is directed to achievement of the following purposes:

- formation of ability to communicate in a foreign language, at the elementary level taking into account speech opportunities and needs of preschool children in oral (audition and speaking) a form;
- familiarizing of children with new social experience with use of a foreign language: acquaintance of preschool children to the world of foreign peers, to foreign children's folklore and available; education of the friendly attitude towards representatives of other countries.
- development of speech, mental and informative abilities of younger school students; development of motivation to further acquisition of a foreign language;
- education and versatile development of the preschool child by means of a foreign language.

Within the program children have to get acquainted with national and cultural traditions of the country of the learned language, to seize enough lexical units. The program has to be directed to education of interest in acquisition of a foreign language, formation of the harmonious personality, to development of mental processes and also informative and language abilities; contributes to the development of the active and passive speech, the correct sound pronunciation at the conscious level.

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Коммуникативтік құзыреттің қарапайым деңгейі мектепке дейінгі кезеңде ағылшын тіліне оқытудың мақсаты ретінде

Мақала Қазақстан Республикасында мектепке дейінгі мекемелердің типтік оқу бағдарламасы мен ағылшын тілін меңгеру деңгейінің халықаралық жіктемесі негізінде «коммуникативтік құзыреттің қарапайым деңгейі» анықтамасын зерттеуге арналған. Аталған құжаттарды салыстыру арқылы коммуникативтік құзыреттілік деңгейі анықталып, сипаттама берілді. Мектепке дейінгі кезеңде жоғарыда аталған екі құжатта аңғарылған қарама-қайшылықтар осы мекемелерде ағылшын тілін оқытудың жаңа мазмұнын ұсынуға негіз болып табылады. Өз кезегінде, ол оқытуда сапалы нәтижеге қолжеткізіп, мектеп бағдарламасын меңгеруге септігін тигізері анық.

Клт сөздер: коммуникативтік құзыреттің қарапайым деңгейі, мектепке дейінгі оқыту, ағылшын тілін меңгеру деңгейлері.

Е.А. Костина, Т.А. Кохановер

Элементарный уровень коммуникативной компетенции как цель обучения английскому языку на дошкольном этапе

Статья посвящена изучению понятия «элементарный уровень коммуникативной компетенции» на основе международной классификации уровней владения английским языком и типовой учебной программы дошкольных учреждений Республики Казахстан. В результате сопоставления этих документов даны: определение понятия и характеристики элементарного уровня коммуникативной компетенции. На основании противоречий, обнаруженных в типовой программе и международных требованиях к обучению английскому языку на данной ступени, предложено содержание обучения английскому языку в дошкольных учреждениях, обеспечивающее не только качественные результаты обучения, но и подготовку к усвоению школьной программы.

Ключевые слова: элементарный уровень коммуникативной компетенции, дошкольное обучение, уровни владения английским языком.

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