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YOUNG LEARNERS' RHYTHMIC AND INTONATION SKILLS THROUGH DRAMA

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the problem of implementing drama techniques into the process of developing young learners' rhythmic and intonation skills. The main task of learning the foreign language is using it as a mean of pupils' communication in oral and written forms. The author proves that drama techniques integrate successfully all types of speech activities. It is specified that this method transfers the focus from teaching grammatically correct speech to training clear and effective communication. The author emphasizes on that sentence stress and speed of speech has the greatest influence on the rhythm. The application of these drama techniques are thought to increase primary school pupils' level of motivation to master the language skills perfectly, it provides a positive psychological climate in English classes. The teachers' role has a tendency to minimizing. They act as facilitators. In author's opinion if they do impose the authority implementing drama activities into the classroom, the educational value of drama techniques will be never gained. It is also disclosed that rhythmic and intonation skills shouldn't be formed spontaneously, the process of their development has to be conducted in certain stages (presentation and production) to make pupils' speech fluent and pronunciation clear, introducing the exercises based on drama techniques. At the stage of presentation the following exercises have the most methodological value: speed dictations, dictogloss, asking questions to practise recognizing word boundaries, matching phrases to stress patterns, marking stresses and weak forms, authentic listening. At production stage they suggest using exercises like play reading and play production. The following pieces of drama texts are recommended to be applied for teaching primary school children: jazz chants, poems, scripted plays and simple scenes from different movie genres. It is also proved that drama techniques and activities contribute to development of skills of self-assessing by young learners their level of rhythmic and intonation skills.

Key words: young learners; rhythmic and intonation skills; drama techniques; presentation stage; production stage; language skills.

МЕТОД ДРАМАТИЗАЦІЇ ЯК ЗАСІБ ФОРМУВАННЯ РИТМІКО- ІНТОНАЦІЙНИХ НАВИЧОК МОЛОДШИХ ШКОЛЯРІВ

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Анотація. Стаття присвячена проблемі використання методу драматизації як засобу формування ритміко-інтонаційних навичок молодших школярів. Головним завданням вивчення іноземної мови на початковому етапі є навчити учнів спілкуватися в усній та писемній формі. Автор доводить, що метод драматизації вдало інтегрує всі види мовленнєвої діяльності. Зазначено, що застосування цього методу переносить акцент з навчання граматично правильного мовлення на навчання виразного та ефективного мовленнєвого спілкування. Виявлено, що застосування технік драматизації підвищує мотивацію учнів початкової школи до досконалого навичками усного мовлення, забезпечує позитивний психологічний клімат. Формування ритміко-інтонаційних навичок відбувається у два етапи (демонстрація та відтворення) з уведенням вправ із використанням методу драматизації. Доведено, що цей метод сприяє формуванню вмінь самостійного оцінювання молодшими школярами рівня сформованості ритміко-інтонаційних навичок.

Ключові слова: молодші школярі; ритміко-інтонаційні навички; метод драматизації; етап демонстрації; етап автоматизації; мовленнєві навички.

МЕТОД ДРАМАТИЗАЦИИ КАК СПОСОБ ФОРМИРОВАНИЯ РИТМИКО-ИНТОНАЦИОННЫХ УМЕНИЙ МЛАДШИХ ШКОЛЬНИКОВ

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Аннотация. Статья посвящена проблеме использования метода драматизации как средства формирования ритмико-интонационных навыков младших школьников. Главной целью изучения иностранного языка на начальном этапе является обучение детей использовать иностранный язык как средство общения. Автор утверждает, что метод драматизации интегрирует в себе все виды речевой деятельности. Обосновано, что внедрение метода драматизации переносит акцент с обучения учеников грамматически правильной речи на обучение выразительного и эффективного речевого общения. Формирование ритмико-интонационных навыков осуществляется в два этапа (демонстрация и воспроизведение) с введением упражнений, в которых используются техники драматизации. В статье обосновано, что применение метода драматизации повышает мотивацию учащихся начальной школы к совершенствованию навыков устной речи, обеспечивает положительный психологический климат. Доказано, что метод драматизации способствует формированию умений самостоятельного оценивания младшими школьниками уровня сформированности ритмико-интонационных навыков.

Ключевые слова: младшие школьники; ритмико-интонационные навыки; метод драматизации; этап демонстрации; этап автоматизации; речевые навыки.

Problem setting in general. Integration of Ukraine with European countries caused the requirement to learn English as a mean of communication. This demands renewal of forms, techniques and approaches to teaching the

foreign language. The main emphasis is made not on the instructive method of teaching, mostly grammar rules, but on clear pronunciation and effective communication skills. So forming auditory, rhythmic and intonation skills plays an important part in this process.

In methodology of foreign languages the drama has become an efficient technique that allows students to be an active participant in foreign language communication. It also gives an opportunity to model real life situations where children can play different roles and make up their speech.

The latest papers and publications on the problem. Scientists L. Birkun, S. Nikolayeva present the traditional methodology of forming pronunciation and intonation skills. J. Maidment, T. Taguchi, P. Boersma and D. Weenink have developed special software for teaching phonetics. O. Bihych and S. Roman have devoted the research to the problem of primary school children's social and cultural competence. Because forming rhythmic and intonation skills is conducted through learning words, rhymes and listening to audio recording. Steve Darv, a teacher trainer, explores phonological system of the English language and mutual influence of its parts on each other while forming students' rhythmic skills.

The analysis of current text books for primary school has shown that they lack exercises for forming rhythmic and intonation skills. G. Carkin and C. Wessels created the system of exercises for learning pronunciation through drama. But there is no specialized study on forming primary students' rhythmic and intonation skills through drama.

The aim of the study is to justify theoretically and to develop practically the drama techniques for forming primary students' rhythmic and intonation skills.

Presentation of basic research material. The main field of an English teacher's methodological activity is reaching the practical purpose of pupils' acquisition of the foreign language. According to the current curriculum (2016) pupils should learn the foreign language at the level that is adequate for using English as the tool of communication. The process of communication is possible due to language skills; phonetic, lexical and grammar ones are among them. At primary school the special attention is paid to phonetic component of the language competence as reforming the contents of primary education requires pupils to be basic users of English. That means they should speak English following word and phrasal stress and separating correctly sentence in syntagms; young learners have also to master the intonation in emotional statements, emotional questions,

questions tags, Wh-questions, neutral statements, yes/no questions, enumeration, commands, and exclamations.

Steve Darn considers English as a very rhythmic language. He proves if learners master the rhythm, they will sound more natural and fluent. Sentence stress has the greatest influence on the rhythm. Speed of speech is also one of the important factors for maintaining the rhythm [3].

Also while teaching a foreign language we cannot exclude interference of the native language aspects into learning process. It concerns phonetic skills the most because the acquisition of a native language happens unconsciously and it has the biggest influence on the levels of syllables, stress, rhythm and intonation. So the teacher's main goal is to make this impact minimum [1, p. 96].

Phoneticians and methodologists suggest different ways of solving this problem like making comparative analysis of phonological systems of native and foreign language. S. Nikolaieva considers the imitative method of mastering a foreign language more effective. Thus pupils should listen to recordings of authentic speech and repeat words, sentences and short dialogues. Reproducing words and word combinations primary school children learn clear pronunciation; reproduction of sentences and whole dialogues gives an opportunity to form rhythmic and intonation component of English speech. That means pausation, melody, stress, fusion of stressed and unstressed syllables, speech tempo which provide reception and understanding addressed speech. Students benefit from imitating dialogues as they try to reproduce real-life communication using mimics, gestures, moves of the body etc.

Some pronunciation teaching practitioners prefers drama techniques in learning process. There are some reasons. Firstly, the forming of rhythmic and intonation skills are usually conducted on two levels – reception and reproduction, drama techniques cover both. Secondly, they deal with pupils' emotions and feelings that make studying more memorable and diverse, and in such a way they raise motivation to learning the language. Thirdly, drama technique is a kind of interactive technologies which have a number of advantages while teaching primary school children. They possess a close connection with real life whereas pupils have different roles and an opportunity to express their attitude to situation.

In teaching phonological skills of the English language Ukrainian methodologists (O. Bigych, S. Nikolaieva, and S. Roman) distinguish two main stages: presenting and recognition; production. Implementing drama techniques we should follow these two stages.

At the stage of presentation of phonological patterns it is recommended to choose that piece of drama text which students will produce. The samples of drama texts for primary school children are jazz chants, poems, scripted plays and simple scenes from different movie genres. There are some requirements to introducing this piece. It should be authentic and a teacher is to use audio recordings in order learners to listen to authentic speech. One more rule is integrating rhythm and intonation into grammar and vocabulary skills to contribute to forming pupils' communicative competence. The intonation patterns and sounds that differ greatly from native ones are distinguished from the flow of speech. The teacher gives instructions how to pronounce them correctly.

Later recognition activities like differentiation, indication begin. So teacher trainer of British Council Steve Darn emphasizes on such activities to exercise pupils' recognition of intonation patterns: some variations of dictations (speed dictations, dictogloss); asking questions about what the third (fifth, seventh) word in the sentence is; matching phrases to stress patterns; marking stresses and weak forms in presented patterns etc [3].

At the stage of producing the drama activities can be efficiently implemented. There is a gradual sequence of class activities – two main cycles. At the first cycle it's preferable to start with play reading in such a way students try to call to mind rules of articulation, word and sentence stress, and intonation. The frequent repeating of the intonation pattern and correcting mistakes in sound pronunciation and rhythm reproduction is a bit tiresome, but rehearsal the dialogues before playing dramas makes this process motivated as clear and correct pronunciation for accuracy of speech is the main aim of using drama techniques. The teacher has to pay learners' attention to focusing on the following tasks: using the intonation that conveys the correct communicative meaning and posing the organs of speech for clear production of sounds. Learning the role speech by pupils is accompanied with correcting mistakes. Pupils also learn to express their feelings, emotions and mood using drama techniques like changes in intonation, stress and speed, transmitting barely noticeable meaning, while trying to make speech sound natural [4]. The whole process of interaction between a teacher and pupils becomes learner-centered. The teacher acts as a facilitator, if he or she does imposes the authority implementing drama activities into the classroom, he or she will never gain the educational value of drama techniques.

At the second cycle learners move to play production. Playing a varied set of roles pupils get skills to build their speech with paralinguistic tools: intonation,

voice, stress, gesture, and mimics. Drama playing makes pupils get acquainted with the culture because authentic materials always contain information about customs, traditions, lifestyle and national mentality of native speakers.

Some English sites present on-line resources for implementing drama into classroom. They are Children's Theatre and Creative Drama (<http://www.childdrama.com/>); The Drama Teacher's Resource Room (<http://www3.sk.sympatico.ca/erachi/index.html>), DramaInELT.org (<http://www.dramainelt.org/>),

Being young learners pupils depend on teachers' assessment of sounds of English and on feedback of their performance. In this early stage learners cannot know which phonological aspects of speech flow are important and which are not. But involvement into drama activities increases pupils' awareness and their own internal criteria of what is acceptable and what is not, producing the speech in English.

It is difficult to predict exactly when pupils can start to assess their own pronunciation skills and be more independent from the teacher's feedback. Joanne Kenworthy claims that a good indicator is self-correction. When a learner begins to spontaneously correct own performance, then this is a sure sign of the development of self-evaluation and monitoring skills [5, p. 118].

To assess students' rhythmic and intonation skills practitioners suggest record typing of pupils' performance and then playing it for analyzing with the teacher. These sessions in which the teacher spends a few minutes listening to the pupil's tape, playing earlier and later sequences and analysing whether the pupil's rhythmic and intonation skills have improved, are extremely valuable to learners. This individual attention will be interpreted by the learner as another reflection of the teacher's concern for his or her pronunciation. If the teacher's concern is obvious, then the learner's own concern and motivation will be positively affected, too [5, p. 118 – 121].

Summary. Rhythmic and intonation skills are totally important for young learners while mastering the foreign language as a mean of communication. Using drama techniques and activities contributes to getting experience in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Drama integrates all these language skills in natural way. It also fosters pupils' motivation making learning process varied and entertaining. We can also conclude that rhythmic and intonation skills shouldn't be formed spontaneously, the process of their development has to be conducted in certain stages to make pupils' speech fluent and pronunciation clear.

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