



TEACHING ENGLISH TO PRESCHOOL CHILDREN USING ENVIRONMENTAL CONCEPTS

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Abstract: *At the moment, an increasing number of parents want their children to begin learning a foreign language (mostly English) before starting school. It is also critical to teach kindergarten children about nature conservation and environmental education, which is becoming a major issue around the world. Many kindergartens in Uzbekistan offer this option, and some, particularly private ones, offer only English programs. Most kindergartens offer an English course to their students as an extracurricular activity once or twice a week. But what exactly is the purpose of this instruction? What do the children do during an English lesson? How long should the lesson last? The goal of this article is to address these and many other issues concerning the teaching of English to pre-school children using ecological examples.*

Key words: kindergartens, ecology, songs, lyrics, method of total physical response.

1. Introduction

Teaching English to pre-school children became popular, and it has continued to grow since then. Many kindergartens throughout our Republic provide the opportunity to learn a foreign language. These are typically international kindergartens that use language immersion as their primary teaching method. Other kindergartens, whether national, state, or private, provide the option of learning a second language using various foreign methods. These classes are usually held once a week or twice a month. Tuition is provided by a kindergarten teacher or a hired person with a degree in teaching English as a second language. Furthermore, psychologists argue that it is best to begin learning a second language as soon as possible because all perceptions are stored in the same area of the brain until the age of seven. However, after that age, each foreign language has its own network of neurons, necessitating switching between individual networks. As a result, as the proverb goes, the earlier you begin learning a foreign language, the better. Furthermore, it has already been scientifically proven that children at this age have a strong potential to acquire nearly an infinite amount of new information, particularly when it comes to second language learning. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that children who learn a second language at a young age have more active brain spheres and later have less difficulty in school subjects other than English.



Ecology is the study of the relationships between living organisms, including humans, and their physical environment; it seeks to understand the vital links between plants and animals and their surroundings. Ecology also informs us about the benefits of ecosystems and how we can use Earth's resources in ways that leave the environment in good condition for future generations. It is also critical to teach kindergarten children about environmental protection and education, which is becoming a major issue around the world today. As a result, teaching children about environmental issues and solutions in English classes is an effective way to solve these two problems. In this case, it would be appropriate for us to select the lexicon used in English lessons from words related to ecology.

2. English lessons in the kindergartens

As previously stated, kindergartens can run their entire program in a foreign language; however, most commonly, they only run a few classes in English. Some kindergartens offer English classes in the afternoon, while others incorporate them into their morning program, which is obviously preferable because children are still alert, and thus their attention and concentration are much higher. Each lesson should last between 20 and 30 minutes. Children are typically divided into four groups based on their age: 3-4 year olds (their tuition is primarily limited to action-based activities), 4-5 year olds, 5-6 year olds, and 6-7 year olds (their tuition can also include some drama techniques). When only a few children attend English lessons, they are sometimes divided based on their knowledge.

There are some suggestions and guidelines for teaching English to preschoolers. This guide suggests that teachers should follow the natural developmental characteristics of children of this age when teaching English. Furthermore, the guide contains ten rules for things to keep in mind when teaching English, which are as follows:

1. ability to understand;
2. exploitation of games and movement;
3. indirect teaching;
4. development of imagination;
5. activation of all senses;
6. changing of activities;
7. reinforcement;
8. individual approach;
9. use of native language;
10. use of positive motivation.

3. Activities during English lessons with eco-examples.

Aside from sample Internet sources, there are a plethora of pre-school printed teaching materials for teachers to use and apply on pre-school English learning



activities. ESL activities and mini-books for every classroom (2001), for example, or "Bolalar uchun ingliz tili" (English for Children) - 2003. Children enjoy seeing various types of visuals, such as posters, flashcards, pictures, videos, picture books, and picture dictionaries. Combining hand-made and factory-made materials is ideal. Children enjoy engaging in practical, fun activities and exercises for kids, such as making holiday postcards or birthday cards. There are several teaching methods that can keep children's attention and concentration at this age. They are as follows:

- * method of practical works;
- * method of drawing and conversation;
- * method of singing and reading poems;
- * method of total physical response.

Probably, the most effective method is the **method of total physical response** (TPR) because one remembers:

- 10% of what one has read,
- 20% of what one has heard,
- 30% of what one has seen,
- 50% of what one has heard and seen,
- 70% of what one has said,
- 90% of what one has done

TPR is commonly used in English classroom activities. During the English lesson, the teacher attempts to mimic the process, and the students respond to instructions that require physical movement. This method can be used to practice and teach a variety of skills, and it is especially effective when used in children's activities. Furthermore, TPR-based English language activities do not require much preparation on the part of the teacher because this approach necessitates basic language, universal preschool lesson themes:

- Greetings
- Family members
 - Numbers
 - Colors
 - Animals
 - House
- Body parts
 - Food
- Fruit and vegetables
 - Clothes
- Weather, four seasons

Although literature is provided in English language classes, it does not include topics aimed at protecting ecology and nature. It is the responsibility of English teachers to incorporate such topics into their classes. It should not be forgotten during



this process that ecologically significant words should be added to them without changing the topics, and this situation allows for environmental education to be carried out without interfering with the teaching system or textbooks. As an example, we can see some teaching eco-English activities here.

Some of the TPR activities might be songs. For example, when talking about the body parts, teachers can use the song *Head, shoulders, knees and toes*. While using this song in the teaching process, we can use pictures or toys of animals that need to be protected as examples. For example, pandas, tigers, polar bears, etc. Giving information about the names of these animals, their habitats and the need to protect them during the training will make our lesson more meaningful. While children are singing, they are also pointing at the parts of their body.

The lyrics of the song are as follows:

*Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes.
Head and shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes.
And ears and eyes and mouth and nose.
Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes.[6]*

Or when learning colors, children can touch things or pictures of the color the teacher says. Here we can use also pictures of animals, birds, plants and flowers. For example, the teacher says: *Red!* And all the children look for the red thing. When they find it, they touch it and say red.

Another TPR activity is a guessing game. The teacher has a bag, full of different kinds of fruits and vegetables and children repeat after the teacher:

*Hands up, hands down,
it's big, it's small,
It's red, it's green,
It's natural and clean,
what is it?*

And the teacher takes out of his bag, for example, a banana, and the child who will guess it, gets a point. S/he who has the most of the points, wins. This activity helps us to teach children to eat more natural foods as fruits and vegetables.[6]

However, the most popular game with TPR approach is *Simon says*. One of the children is Simon. Simon gives instructions and other children do what they are asked to do; for example, *Simon says: jump!* And all the children jump, and those who do not respond are out of the game. During the activity, children do physical training and learn to concentrate their minds. If we conduct this training in nature, we will be able to teach children to establish a proper relationship with nature.

4. Conclusion



The teaching of English to pre-school children is undoubtedly meaningful if it meets a natural development of a child and it is appropriate to his/her age[1]. Moreover, it is successful if the teacher of English has an adequate knowledge of the target language, masters relevant methodology of teaching English at this stage of education and she is enthusiastic about teaching young children. Then, it is also an asset for the children since they pick up the language in the same way as they acquire their native language. It is also very useful to teach a child to love nature, to protect it and to have a proper relationship with nature from an early age. Teaching English through environmental examples allows us to effectively solve two problems at the same time.

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