Speech Competence of Primary School Students: Cognitive Approach

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Abstract

This article reveals the peculiarities of speech competence formation of primary school students in the conditions of cognitive approach realization. The article found out that the formation of speech competence of primary school students is facilitated by the cognitive teaching of language. This approach teaches students to consciously construct expressions in specific life situations. It has been proved that speech competence is an integral quality of a person, manifested in the ability and willingness to use linguistic means, regularities of their functioning for the construction, and understanding of speech utterances in accordance with the communicative purpose. To assess the level of speech competence formation, we relied on indicators of the category "Application" by Bloom's taxonomy, the Oxford Cambridge 2000 program, the modified methodology "КОС-22", specific norms of competence pedagogy. It has been found that mastering cognitive skills enables a person to work with information independently in the process of acquiring it (mastering knowledge). It is proved that the text represents speech competence. It is substantiated that the following types of exercises are leading in the work on the text: analytical, associative, and research. It is proved that the cognitive approach is based on the provisions of cognitive psychology, which implies a reliance on the principle of consciousness in the process of speech competence formation in primary school students. This approach directs the educational process to communicative activities, ensuring the proper level of students' speech competence.

Keywords: Cognitive approach, Cognitive skills, Speech competence, Communication goal, Primary school students, Structural components of speech action, Speech skills.

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Introduction

Modern tendencies of school language education imply strengthening of the practical orientation of the process of mastering the mother tongue, subordination of the work on the language theory to the interests of students' speech development. Considering this, the goal of the primary school language course is to teach students to use Ukrainian fluently as a means of communication, spiritual enrichment, and formation of intellectual culture. This approach ensures the proper level of speech competence of students, which is one of the most important conditions for successful socialization. This can be achieved through the transformation of language learning technologies and the development of innovative techniques.

At present, there is a theoretical development and practical implementation of anthropo-oriented techniques, in particular, cognitive teaching methods of the Ukrainian language. Since language is a means of communication, on the one hand, and a means of cognition, on the other (cognitive (from Latin. Cognitio – knowledge, cognition)), we consider the cognitive approach as a cognitive technique that directs the student's activities to learn the rules, the use of lexical and grammatical models on the basis of which conscious expression is constructed. In the cognitive model of learning, we consider a student as an active participant in the process of forming language skills (Pentyluk, Goroshkina, & Nikitina, 2011).

Observations of the Ukrainian language lessons, conversations with students and teachers made it possible to find out that primary school students violate the norms of the modern Ukrainian literary language not only in oral but also in written speech. Students are not sufficiently aware of the importance of a high culture of speech in communication; often produce texts with the same sentences; stylistic inaccuracies are assumed. On average, 6-7% of students showed a high level of the language, and about 35% had a sufficient level.

Therefore, the actuality of the cognitive teaching methodology of the Ukrainian language is due to the insufficient level of communicative training of students and their ability to apply linguistic knowledge in specific life situations.

The peculiarity of cognitive methodology lies in the interpretation of language units as concepts – carriers of ethno-cultural information, special signals of a particular world. The purpose of such a technique is to help students master linguistic units as concepts – deep meanings of the detailed content structures of the text, which is the embodiment of the author's motives and intentions, in order to form the ability to adequately perceive textual information and to create their own (oral and written) utterances in accordance with the communicative purpose. The cognitive approach develops cognitive activity of students, increases interest in learning the Ukrainian language, fosters respect for the linguistic traditions of the Ukrainian people, and a desire to follow the aesthetic and ethical norms of communication.

The aim of the article is to reveal the peculiarities of speech competence formation of primary school students in the conditions of cognitive approach realization.

To achieve this goal the following tasks were set:

• to represent the content and structure of the speech competence of primary school students;

• to characterize the peculiarities of organizing the educational process in primary school on the basis of a cognitive approach;

• to substantiate and illustrate the cognitive methodology of teaching the Ukrainian language to primary school students;

• to make conclusions on the effectiveness of the use of the cognitive approach for teaching the Ukrainian language to primary school students.

Literature Review

Analysis of recent research and publications has shown that the interest of scholars in developing effective approaches to language learning and language development is increasing. The basis for this statement is the active scientific search for the solution of the problem of communicative orientation of language learning, in particular the study by Demidchyk, G. (development of communicative-speaking skills of primary school students by means of auxiliary parts of the language), Kazandzhieva, M. (formation of communicative-speaking skills in the process of working with educational texts), Penkova, S. (formation of the culture of the Ukrainian speech of first-graders), Lyashkevich, A. (formation of dialog speech of primary school students), Chuprin, O. (development of speech of primary school students with the use of multimedia means). Modern methodological science proposes the process of teaching students of their native language to direct the development of speaking skills and the formation of communicative competence (mastery of speech competence occurs in the course of communication – active involvement in speech activity).

The cognitive methodology is based on pedagogical works by Ushinsky, K., Sukhomlinsky, V., Stelmakhovich, M., linguistic studies by Batsevich, F., Ermolenko, S., Kononenko, V., Kochergan, M., Selivanova, O., Serazhim, K. The theoretical foundations of cognitive methodology are based on the provisions of cognitive linguistics, "which views language not as "a system in itself and for itself" (the expression of F. de Saussure), but in connection with the person without whom the emergence and functioning of this system would be impossible" (Kochergan, 2003).

In cognitive linguistics, language functioning is regarded as a kind of cognitive activity. Human consciousness, its mechanisms and structures are investigated during the analysis of linguistic phenomena. The core of cognitive linguistics is the concept as a kind of representation of an object reflected in the human psyche and displayed in language. For the cognitive methodology, the idea of frames is important, which, according to scientists, are components of the concept system (Kochergan, 2003).

A frame – is a kind of structure, a pattern that reflects in the human mind the situations which create the new ones. This process is language-related, and so is learning. The linguistic and didactic principles of certain aspects of the cognitive methodology of the Ukrainian language are covered in the works by Bilyaev, O., Vashulenko, M., Onkovych, G., Matsko, L., Melnychaiko, V., Palamar, L., Pentyluk, M., Skurativsky, L., and Shelekhova, G.

The analysis of didactics' works shows that in the scientific and methodical paradigm some aspects of the problem are substantiated. The theoretical and applied aspects of the implementation of cognitive methodology for the formation of speech competence of primary school students are not developed enough, and therefore this approach is not fully used by primary school teachers.

Methods

To fill the aforementioned gap in the literature, we conducted an exploratory study in Zaporizhzhia and Chernihiv regions during 2017-2019. As part of the study, we interviewed 115 teachers as well as we conducted a wide literature review to identify the priority directions for the formation of speech competence of primary school students.

The research takes into account the scientific findings by the leading Ukrainian and foreign psychologists (Ball, G., Vygotsky, L., Halperin, P., Elkonin, D.), researchers of preschool children's

speech (Bogush, A., Gvozdev, O., Krutiy, K., Lublins'ka, G., Fedorenko, L.) and the primary school age (Bader, V., Varzatska, L., Vashulenko, M.).

Cognitive theories of personality are based on the interpretation of a person. Hence, the urgent task is to identify the regulatory role of various psychological properties, which are internal conditions of productive learning. Such properties can relate to different levels of functioning of the psyche: perception, processing and analysis of educational information, regulation of learning, which determines the choice of teaching methods, organizational forms of students' training and independent work (Chumak, 2015).

Cognitive development is analyzed by 22 indicators: the generalized transfer of the acquired knowledge to new material on one's own initiative, the use of mental operations in new conditions (Kabanova-Meller, E.); mental operations: analysis, synthesis, generalization, abstraction, concretization, comparison, classification (Menchins'ka, N.); qualities of the mind: independence, depth, criticality, flexibility, age dynamic (Kalmykova, Z.); learning as a susceptibility to learning (Ananiev, B., Menchins'ka, N., Kalmykova, Z.); "Generalization from place" as a separation of principle, regularities without bundling of specific options (Rubinstein, S., Krutetsky, V.); decentralization of mental activity (Elkonin, B.); intellectual initiative as the search for something beyond what is necessary (Bogoyavlens'ka, D.); mechanisms of intellectual operations (Piaget, J.); internal action plan (Ponomariv, P.).

To assess the level of development of communicative abilities, we used the modified methodology "KOS-22" (Fedorishin, B.). It helps to show the ability to clearly and quickly establish business and social contacts, the desire to expand them, to influence people, to take initiative.

An indicator of speech competence (and competence in general) is the Bloom taxonomy category. It defines the ability to implement the material studied in specific conditions and new situations. This includes the application of rules, methods, concepts, laws, principles, theories. Using the Oxford Cambridge 2000 program (England) as a base, we have identified new approaches to assessing communicative competence (Kasprzhak, 2008). The program includes a list of requirements for communicative competence and structural components of readiness (motivational, substantive, procedural, communicative), analyzing which, we found out, whether or not competence was formed.

Defining the criteria and indicators of communicative competence, which forms the basis for a proper assessment of the level of speech competence, we relied on certain specific rules of competence pedagogy, namely: the organization of the student's accumulation of their own experience with determining successes and failures, samples for reference (Kasprzhak, A., Pometun, O., Khutorsky, A.); fixation of the student's motivation (need) regarding the level of self-competence formation, necessity of its formation (Granitska, A.); introduction to the educational process of the concept of the situation, i. e. unpredictability, misunderstanding, difficulties, which requires a comprehensive response, the use of all resources for successful situational action (Paraschenko, L.).

The range of characteristics of levels of speech competence formation (cognitive, communicative-evaluative, expressive) indicates the degree of ability to work according to the instructions, to follow the pattern, to reproduce skills of integrated action in the performance of training tasks, in problematic situations, to be a model for others.

Content and structure of speech competence of primary school students

Modern linguistic didactics actively uses the concept of "speech competence". There is an ambiguous interpretation of this term in the scientific literature. Pentyluk, M. regards speech competence as a human activity aimed at understanding or creating a text (oral or written) that is carried out in the process of speech activity (Pentyluk, 2003). Horoshkina, O. means under the

competence of speech the practical mastery of the Ukrainian language, its vocabulary, grammatical order, adherence to verbal and written expressions of linguistic norms (Horoshkina, 2007). Bogush, A. defines speech competence as the ability to adequately and appropriately use the language in specific situations, to use it both for linguistic and extra-lingual (facial expressions, gesture) and intonational means of expressing speech (Bogush, 2007).

Understanding communicative competence as "the ability to use a language depending on the situation, the particular quality of the speech personality acquired in the course of communication or specially organized learning", Pentyluk, M. views speech competence as a basic concept in the structure of communicative competence and defines it as "the ability to use knowledge in practice, to use linguistic units" (Pentyluk, 2003). Hudzik, I. believes that speech competence is manifested in the ability to use linguistic tools to understand and construct a text (Hudzik, 2007).

Based on the definition of the concept, we have come to the conclusion that speech competence is an integral quality of a person, manifested in the ability and willingness to use linguistic means, laws of their functioning for construction and understanding of speech utterances in accordance with the communicative purpose.

There are different perspectives on how to define the content of speech activity. We share the viewpoint of Leont'ev, O. and Zimnya, I. and define speech skills as the ability of a person to realize the structural components of speech action – orientation, planning, implementation, and control.

Orientation is of great importance in the theory of speech. Researchers identify several sides (or subjects) of speech action orientation: message orientation; language targeting as an objective messaging system; orientation or assessment personally by the speaker of the significance of the subject matter; orientation or assessment of the degree of adequacy of the chosen linguistic means to solve the communicative problem; targeting the recipient of speech – taking into account features and capabilities (Hrona, 2017).

The next step in creating an expression is *planning*. Depending on the conditions of communication, a speaker chooses the form of speech (oral or written, monologic or dialogical), style of speech (spoken, business, book, journalistic), type of speech (story, description, reasoning), genre of speech (story, speech, writing), etc). At this stage of speech activity, a selection of means and a way of forming and formulating one's own or another's (external) thought in the process of speech communication is made (Hrona, 2017).

In the third stage of expression (*realization*), according to the topic, the situation of communication, concept and plan of expression, the internal speech is implemented in external (oral or written) speech, is embodied in specific words, phrases, sentences, texts. The requirements of correctness, accuracy, and expressiveness of speech are essential (Hrona, 2017).

The last phase is *control*, determination of the degree and quality of the plan's implementation, providing feedback: the ability to assess and control the speech activity of the recipients (mutual assessment and control) and the ability to assess and control own speech activity (self-assessment and self-control) (Bogush, 2007).

Speech skills acquire specific external manifestations depending on the characteristics of each particular type of speech activity. Depending on the orientation of the speech act to receive or deliver the speech message and the nature of the external expression, the types of speech activity are defined as receptive (listening, reading) and productive (speaking, writing). These two basic parameters divide

the types of speech activity into two large groups and determine the peculiarities of the speech skills depending on the type of speech activity (Vyshnik, 2012).

Receptive speech activities include the ability to determine the topic of a speech message and divide the speech message into content (orientation), determine the main opinion of the content part and thoughts detailing the main, to establish the logic of the content message (planning), to determine the overall content of the message (implementation), adequacy of the message's perception (control).

Productive speech activities include the ability to understand the original concept of expression, to integrate superphrasal content into a coherent speech message (orientation), to hold in memory and predict the basic thought of each content part, to determine the structural and semantic unity of the whole text, to establish the logic of the message (planning), to verbalize the predictive structure of the text (implementation), to control the correctness of the created text (control).

Therefore, the formation of the speech competence of primary school students is the ability to listen, perceive and reproduce information, read and understand a text, be engaged in discussions, persuade and defend their point of view, express their own opinions, points of view, in oral and written forms.

Organization of educational process in primary school based on cognitive approach

In modern studies, cognitiveness is seen as a cognitive activity of a person who has psychological nature and is associated with speech as a form of thought. This is expressed in the formed cognitive skills.

Researchers interpret cognitive skills differently: the ability of the individual to perform mental operations: to analyze, synthesize, diagnose phenomena (Atanov, G., Druzhinin, N., Kuts, R.); ability to acquire knowledge independently (Burova, A., Tubelsky, A.); ability to work with different types of information in the process of learning (Ganaeva, O., Zabrodina, I., Sheina, I.).

The conclusions of philosophers (Ruzavin, G., Nadolny, I., Tsykin, V.), psychologists (Atkinson, R., Elliot, A., Solso, R.), linguists (Kubryakova, O., Maslova, V., Pimenova, M., Stepanov, Y.) regarding definitions of concepts "cognition", "cognitive processes" gave reason to argue that cognitive skills are related to the processes of cognition, namely acquisition, assimilation, processing, preservation of information coming to a person from different channels, rethinking knowledge, deducing logical conclusions and decisions. Therefore, we understand cognitive skills as general (universal) skills, the acquisition of which enables a person to independently work with information in the process of its acquisition (learning). To acquire knowledge means to be able to reproduce the elements of the educational information base, to apply the elements of educational information to solve typical problems of the subject area, to use the knowledge base to obtain new information and to solve new problems in new conditions. Cognitive skills include organizational, operational, informational, and communicative components. Let's clarify their purpose in the course of text-making, as the text represents speech competence.

The purpose of the first one during the text-making activity is to teach the primary school students to organize their activities for acquiring knowledge, to create meaningful texts: to plan, to be able to search for the necessary sources of information, to orient in them; create thematic dictionaries for writing works; know how to divide a text into paragraphs, plan, annotate; be able to use the Internet. The content of the operational component is the ability to perform actions (cognitive, mental, practical) by algorithms, rules, diagrams, that is, to create the texts themselves. The

communicative component of cognitive skills encompasses a group of skills, the use of which provides interactive (dialog) communication between participants. This component includes knowledge and skills, and textual ones in particular, necessary to acquire new knowledge and apply it in various fields of human activity, such as writing letters, invitations, greetings, online correspondence, etc. (Hrona, 2017).

Motive and purpose are of particular importance in such activities. We define the purpose as a verbally formed task that is offered to a person in an experimental or natural conditions that prompts action. Motive consciously drives a person to some action. Considering the psychological aspects of purpose formation and motive in text-making activities during the preparatory work, we have to direct students to the practical meaning of the created text. For example, when writing a composition, "What profession will I choose?" (Grade 4) in the preparatory work, we motivated the purpose of the created text by providing the following information to the students:

> *How to decide who to study after graduation? How to choose a profession that you like and with good prospects? For choosing a profession, an important role is played by what motivates you to work.*

> *There are different opinions. Some believe that it is prestige, others – the size of wages, some – interest in work. Over time, prestige may fall due to oversaturation of the labor market by specialists. Wages sometimes decrease as well.*

> *The main thing is to have an interest in the profession, to make it a favorite business for you. The one for whom work brings joy, becomes a favorite thing, will work more productively and will constantly improve himself/herself. This will also affect wages. And what do you think?*

Therefore, purpose and motive are powerful incentives for the individual. They determine their activity in actions. If the student does not understand the meaning of the content of the proposed task, then it is an obstacle to text-making activity and generates imperfect texts. Cognitive skills are complex processes that lead to an active state of the individual's system of motives and needs. If an adequate understanding of the purpose and the motive is achieved, the attitude of the individual to the text-making activity becomes conscious and motivated.

The study used types of work that contribute to the awareness of the content of textual information, taking into account the four levels of independent productive activity of students on a concentric principle. They contain copying actions of students according to a given sample; reproductive activities related to the reproduction of information about different properties of the educational object; productive activities of applying the acquired knowledge to solve problems that go beyond the known sample and require the ability to inductive and deductive conclusions; independent activity, which is manifested in the transfer of knowledge during the performance of tasks in substantially new situations, decision making, the development of hypothetical analog thinking.

Therefore, we can distinguish the basic principles of organizing the educational process at the initial stage on the basis of a cognitive approach: conscious learning (primary school students should not learn phonetic and vocabulary, but should learn to use it consciously in different situations of speech); continuity (previously acquired language skills serve as a basis for practical skills); sociocultural education (the need to learn the language through the prism of the national culture of the country); taking into account the psychophysiological features of primary school students.

Since the cognitive approach is a special awareness of learning and cognitive interest, the cognitive skills formed by primary school students will serve as a basis for learning.

Cognitive methods of teaching the Ukrainian language to primary school students

Attention to the semantic meanings of linguistic units and categories determines the content of a cognitive technique that deepens, diversifies the learning of the Ukrainian language. In addition, language, as an optimal connecting link to other types of human activity, provides a cognitive key to understanding human behavior.

The cognitive approach focuses a teacher on understanding the profound linguistic phenomena, on acquainting students with a wider arsenal of semantic meanings, say, grammatical categories. For example, when studying a noun, it is important to focus students' attention on the fact that this part of the language means not only specific objects, but also the phenomena of nature (snow, wind, rain), social phenomena (gathering, meeting, demonstration), signs (width, height), number (tens, hundreds), action (reading, running).

The next cognitive dimension of a teacher's activity is working with a text. Taking into consideration the transformative function of coherent utterances, it is important to actualize their students' internal perceptions, that is, to inquire about the thoughts and feelings caused by specific texts. Interpreting the message and discourse, the speaker thus resorts to expressive and pictorial linguistic means, which help to effectively navigate the environment. When analyzing texts, students may be asked questions and tasks of the following type: *What phrases in the text convey neglect? Read the phrases that express complaints. Add and write down comforting phrases in response. Find phrases that convey wonder.*

Modern pedagogy has identified a student as a subject, an equal partner in the learning process. The new pedagogical paradigm directs a teacher to dialogue with a student. So, there is every reason to talk about dialogism of learning, the need to involve students in a dialogue with the author of a textbook or text, a teacher, a classmate. Encourage a task-like dialogue: become a co-author of a text by writing it down; you are a co-author of a textbook, suggest your own tasks. It is at the level of the text that the semantics of a word, its conceptual connections, the realization of stylistic differentiation of modeling of connected expression are clarified (Hreb, 2015).

The leading types of a text are the following types of exercises: analytical, related to the analysis of textual material; communicative, connected with the involvement of students in active communicative activities, associative, which encourage students to identify emotionally-sensitive attitude to the text and educational material that is studied against its background; research that involves engaging students in creativity through search, by creating and solving problematic situations (Hreb, 2016). Example:

You have friends, you understand that friendship plays an important role in our lives, helps us succeed, endure adversity. Unfortunately, not everyone has friends. Imagine a new boy in the classroom who doesn't want to talk to anyone. Your goal is to convince him that he must have friends.

Imagine what you can see and hear in nature, becoming invisible. Write down the fictitious, continuing the text "If I became invisible ....

Imagine being an archeologist in 2250. All the information on your planet is embedded in computers. So, of course, you first saw a book. Make a story about your sensational find.

An effective means of cognitive methodology is the communicative situation – this is the starting point of any speech action. Formanovskaya, N. defines the communicative situation as a complex of external conditions of communication and internal states of communicants, which are represented in speech behavior – expression, discourse (Formanovskaya, 2002). The communicative situation is also considered as a hierarchically complex component of discourse containing formal-semiotic, cognitive-interpretative, social-interactive levels and divided into separate fragments, units of communication – communicative acts (Makarov, 2003).

In teaching oral communication, it is important first to create a motive, that is, to put the student in such a situation that he or she has the necessity, need, desire to join the communication. And for this, it is necessary to have a purpose: to know something, to inform, to induce someone to action, etc. Example:

- *Imagine that you work at the travel agency "Seasons". Winter holidays are approaching, and you have been instructed to draw up a prospectus for a winter holiday in your area. Using supporting material and selecting your own adjectives, you make a promotional text of 4-6 sentences about the benefits of active winter holidays in your country.*

- *You were mistakenly sent a text message from which you learned that a friend whom you considered to be an honest and respectful friend had told you a lie. What is your reaction? How to convince him not to do the wrong thing?*

- *Express your views. "In front of you is a person you know well but haven't seen for a long time. You are looking forward to this meeting…"; "There's a stranger before you. Let's meet him/her…"; "In front of you is a little baby, scared by something. Come to him/her and calm down … »...*

The cognitive approach directs the learning process of native language by schoolchildren to the development of speech skills and the formation of speech competence by actively engaging in teaching and speaking activities, solving communication problems.

Conclusion

Formation of speech competence of a primary school student is an actual problem of primary school and the main purpose of the course of the Ukrainian language, which is manifested in the ability to successfully use the language in the process of communication, knowledge of the world, and solving vital tasks. The implementation of the cognitive approach optimizes the language learning process in primary school, forms a multicultural linguistic personality, develops and refines the linguistic and conceptual picture of the world.

Linguistic knowledge and complete speech and language skills of the Ukrainian language, acquired in the primary school classes, will not only provide an opportunity for further language education in the main classes, but also facilitate free expression in all spheres of social and industrial life. Therefore, the primary task of teaching young students is to form and improve speech communication. The cognitive approach is based on the provisions of cognitive psychology, which involves the formation of speech competence of primary school students with a reliance on the principle of consciousness. It directs the study of language in the course of communicative activity as an objective category that fixes the socially recognized complex of students' level of knowledge.

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