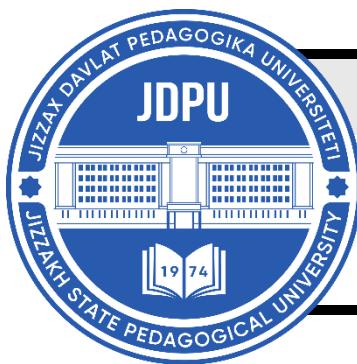


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FACTORS INFLUENCING THE SPEECH SKILLS OF FUTURE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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ABOUT ARTICLE

Key words: speech skills, primary school, teacher training, expressive speech, pedagogical communication, Piaget's theory, Vygotsky, zone of proximal development, communication, cognitive development.

Received: 10.11.25

Accepted: 11.11.25

Published: 13.12.25

Abstract: This article provides an in-depth analysis of the main factors influencing the process of forming and developing speech skills of future primary school teachers. The linguistic and psychological aspects of speech are covered based on the theories of Jean Piaget and L.S. Vygotsky. Also, the composition of speech skills, including expressive speech, listening, reasoning, questioning and discussion skills, is considered from a pedagogical point of view. The article also highlights the role of speech culture in the professional competence of a teacher and puts forward practical recommendations.

Introduction. Speech is the realization of language in the processes of expressing and exchanging thoughts — a specific form of existence of language as a distinct type of social activity. The term speech refers to both its oral (vocal) and written manifestations, that is, the process of speaking and its outcomes (verbal thoughts or works preserved in memory or recorded in writing).

In linguistic theory, the concept of speech is contrasted with the abstract concept of language, which represents the system of expression means accepted by a particular speech community, as well as with the broader social phenomenon — life itself — in its most characteristic forms.

Actual (external) speech serves the purpose of conveying information or messages to others in order to influence their behavior and actions. It appears either in the form of

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articulation — perceivable by the auditory organs (recorded and reproduced using sound-recording devices) — or in the written form, where linguistic signs are symbolically represented.

Alongside external speech, there also exists inner speech, which takes place in the speaker's mind and is aimed at analyzing and solving various cognitive tasks. Inner speech develops on the basis of external speech but occurs without the use of sound or writing, proceeding instead as mental processes involving clear representations of spoken words.

Written speech differs from oral speech in that it is more structured: words are selected with great precision, grammatical constructions are accurate yet complex, and it lacks the direct use of intonation, facial expressions, and gestures typical of oral communication. There are two main types of speech: monologic and dialogic.

In addition to its communicative and interactive functions, speech can also perform other roles — for example, a poetic function. A particular manifestation of speech is reading.

Every individual's speech is unique and distinctive, even though the core components of a language — its vocabulary and grammatical structure — are not personal possessions, but belong collectively to a specific language community.

Speech is closely connected with a person's thinking and consciousness. It is through speech that a person's thoughts are formed and exist. Thanks to speech — and based on speech — it becomes possible to reflect reality in a generalized, abstract way, to move beyond individual perception and engage in logical, conceptual thinking that becomes a product of collective cognition.

Speech also plays a crucial role in manifesting and functioning of various aspects of a person's psyche — perception, memory, imagination, emotions, willpower, and more — and in the development of consciousness itself.

Depending on its sphere of use, speech takes different forms such as artistic (literary), scientific, or official speech. Regardless of its form or context, the most essential qualities of speech should always be clarity, fluency, simplicity, and expressiveness .

Speech skills refer to the ability to express thoughts clearly, intelligibly, and effectively — both orally and in writing — as well as to understand the speech of others. These skills play a crucial role in a person's ability to communicate successfully in social life. Through speech, people exchange information, express emotions, share opinions, and collaborate. Therefore, possessing well-developed speech skills contributes to both personal and professional development.

Among the main types of speech skills are expressive speaking, listening ability, the art of asking questions, reasoning, and debating skills.

Expressive speech is the art of conveying ideas in a clear, organized, and grammatically correct manner. Here, the choice of words, pace of speech, intonation, and coherence of sentences are of great importance.

Listening, on the other hand, is not merely hearing sounds — it involves a deep understanding of the meaning conveyed by the speaker. Attentive listening, as the second side of communication, ensures the effectiveness of interaction.

By asking questions, communication becomes more meaningful and misunderstandings are prevented in advance. In such cases, both the content of the question and the manner in which it is asked play a significant role.

Reasoning involves justifying one's opinion, providing evidence, and establishing logical connections between ideas. Finally, debate is the process through which two sides defend their viewpoints, exchange opinions, and seek common solutions.

Today, specialists focus not only on ensuring that speech is grammatically correct but also on developing speech behavior and communication culture appropriate to social contexts.

To strengthen speech skills, one must practice regularly, read books, listen to one's own speech, and pay close attention to others' opinions. Through such activities, a person gains the ability to communicate effectively with the surrounding environment.

From a psychological perspective, developing a child's speech requires taking into account their mental processes such as conscious thinking, concentration, memory, and perception. For example, according to Jean Piaget's hypothesis, the development of speech in children depends on the formation of their thinking ability. Piaget stated: "The development of a child's speech is a reflection of their intellectual development." Therefore, during the learning process, it is possible to strengthen students' speech skills by developing their logical thinking abilities.

According to Piaget's hypothesis, the development of children's speech is related to their level of intellectual development. This idea is based on Piaget's theory of cognitive development, which connects language acquisition with overall mental growth. Piaget argued that in order to understand the world, children must first build cognitive structures, which are later expressed through language.

For instance, during the sensorimotor stage (0–2 years), children learn object permanence, which later helps form the symbolic function of language — the ability to use words to represent objects.

During the preoperational stage (ages 2–7), a child's intuitive thinking and symbolic reasoning abilities develop, which leads to a rapid advancement in speech. However, according to Piaget, language develops fully only when structured thinking has already formed, because language is the result of cognitive processes, not their cause. Therefore, the development of a child's speech reflects their intellectual maturity.

For example, during the concrete operational stage (ages 7–11), children learn logical reasoning, which enhances their ability to use complex syntax and expand their vocabulary. The formal operational stage (from age 12 onward) is based on abstract and hypothetical thinking, enabling children to express their thoughts through complex grammatical structures.

Piaget's theory emphasizes that language learning depends on the level of cognitive readiness. If a child has not yet reached a particular cognitive stage, their linguistic capabilities remain limited. This hypothesis is crucial for understanding language development from a psychological perspective.

In his works, Piaget thoroughly examined the process of children's intellectual development, linking language acquisition to cognitive structures. From a pedagogical standpoint, the teacher's role in developing speech skills is invaluable. A teacher should serve as a model of effective speech, encourage communication, and use methods such as asking questions, organizing discussions, and dramatization.

As A. Sukhomlinsky noted: "A school should be a place that gives the student the opportunity to express thoughts and encourages them to reason." When such an environment is created, students' speech activity increases significantly.

In addition, differentiation also plays an important role in the development of speech skills. Each student has unique individual characteristics, varying levels of speech development, and different degrees of creativity. Therefore, educators emphasize the importance of working with each student individually. As L. S. Vygotsky stated: "Knowing what the learner's zone of current development is — that is the key to effective teaching." This, in turn, requires the teacher to adopt an individualized approach in the teaching process.

According to L. S. Vygotsky, the concept of the "zone of actual development" refers to the level of knowledge and skills that a learner can perform independently, without any external assistance. In other words, it includes the tasks, exercises, or areas of knowledge that a student can complete on their own at a given moment.

The term "zone of proximal development", on the other hand, refers to the range of activities that a learner cannot yet perform independently, but can accomplish with the help of

adults or more knowledgeable peers. This zone represents the learner's potential capabilities — what they are capable of mastering in the future.

Vygotsky emphasized that, for teaching to be truly effective, an educator must understand not only the learner's current knowledge and skills, but also their developmental potential — that is, their zone of proximal development. Teaching within this zone means providing tasks that are neither too easy nor too difficult, but rather those that can be mastered with some guidance and support. Such an approach, according to Vygotsky, is the key to effective learning.

This idea implies that every student requires an individualized approach: by analyzing their current level of understanding and potential for growth, the teacher can more accurately guide the learning process. On this basis, the teacher helps to uncover the student's inner potential and lead them toward higher stages of development.

In conclusion, speech skills for future primary school teachers represent not only a professional competence, but also a foundation for personal and social success. The development of these skills depends on the interrelation between language and thinking, psychological growth, communication culture, and the teacher's didactic approach.

Applying the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky wisely in pedagogical practice — by considering each learner's individual potential — enables educators to enhance their own speech competence, which in turn positively influences their students' speech development.

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