

## PRINCIPLES OF TEACHING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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**Abstract:** This article highlights principles of teaching a second language in primary schools, methodological problems and their effective solutions. At the same time the article analyzes the differences in the language acquisition of mother tongue and second language. 4 principles of teaching a foreign language suitable for elementary school are given in this research and it proves the fact that everyday teaching activities also offer good opportunities for using authentic language.

**Key words:** acquisition, mother tongue, second language, concept, orientation, authenticity, interdisciplinary learning.

Since its nationwide introduction in Uzbekistan, the teaching of a foreign language in primary schools has been a controversial and sometimes hotly debated issue in educational policy. As a point of criticism, the hasty reaction of politicians in the field of education is rightly mentioned, who, when introducing an early start, ignored questions about the qualifications of teachers and the connection with the secondary level. Many teachers were suddenly faced with the task of teaching English in the primary grades, despite the lack of didactic preparation and foreign language teaching, and they had no choice but to structure their foreign language lessons to the best of their knowledge and beliefs. This knowledge usually comes from one's own experience of teaching a foreign language in high school; However, the study of a foreign language in elementary school is subject to its own principles, since children have completely different learning requirements than those of older students. Foreign language teaching at the primary level can only be organized meaningfully and effectively if these special requirements and the results of research in the field of language teaching are taken into account. This should be remembered not only by primary school teachers, but also to teachers of general education schools, who, instead of recognizing the communicative achievements of students, complain about incorrect statements in a foreign language by their fifth-graders. Anyone who gets the opportunity to attend a modern and high-quality English lesson in elementary school will quickly realize that the effect is by no means “zero”. If the lessons are structured appropriately, students will have basic language skills at the end of elementary school, allowing them to make simple statements in a foreign language. They can apply listening comprehension strategies that make it possible to understand entire children's books in English and have already acquired the cultural knowledge of the target

language countries. However, first of all, you can see with what tangible joy and enthusiasm the children follow the lessons, how openly and inquisitively they get acquainted with a foreign language and culture. It is this positive experience that motivates students to continue learning the language and allows them to grow up to be cosmopolitans and tolerant citizens. In order for these positive attitudes to be maintained by students in their later school careers, greater cooperation between primary and secondary schools is absolutely essential. It is the primary school's job to inform children about the requirements of secondary school while they are encouraged to do so. It is these positive experiences that motivate students to continue learning the language and enable them to grow up to be cosmopolitans and tolerant citizens. In order for these positive attitudes to be maintained by students in their later school careers, greater cooperation between primary and secondary schools is absolutely essential. The task of primary school is to inform children about the requirements of secondary school, while they are being encouraged. In conversations with classmates (most often also with student teachers), who do not know that English is taught in elementary school, I learn that in any case further educational work is required regarding the rationale for early foreign language teaching and its practical implementation.

In this work, the reasons for learning a foreign language early are listed first. The following review of the historical development of early foreign language teaching is intended to clarify what political and social changes led to its creation and what didactic concepts were discussed before the teaching of foreign languages was introduced throughout the country and became compulsory in Uzbek primary schools. After explaining the basic principles of didactics of foreign languages, the objectives of teaching English in elementary school and the content on which they can be based are explained. Since a comprehensive presentation of the didactic possibilities of building a lesson would be beyond the scope of this work, it focuses on the storytelling method, which, in my opinion, perfectly combines several central aspects of learning a foreign language. Detailed explanations on the intended use of authentic children's literature in English classes in elementary school are accompanied by a description of a practical training unit designed to show the possibilities of this method by example. The lessons were held in the bilingual third grade of the secondary school 13, Andijan.

## **2 reasons to start early**

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The various rationales that eventually led to the introduction of early language learning can essentially be summarized in two points. On the one hand, the arguments are based on studies of language acquisition, the results of which indicate that foreign languages can be especially successfully learned in childhood. The extent to which this actually applies will be explained in more detail below. On the other hand, the need for

early learning of a foreign language can be justified by the requirements of educational policy for multilingualism and the foundation of intercultural competence, which are becoming increasingly important against the backdrop of increasing globalization and the interdependence of international relations.

## **2.1 Results of the study of language acquisition**

So let's first take a look at the research area of language acquisition. This is significant not only because the roots of the discussion about early development lie here, but above all because it is here that the basis of the didactics of a foreign language lies. By examining language acquisition processes more closely, language acquisition research also provides answers to questions crucial to didactics, about the extent to which these processes can be controlled through purposeful foreign language teaching, at what age foreign languages can be learned most successfully, and which teaching methods are best suited for a foreign language.

Before these issues are discussed against the backdrop of their scientific background, it is useful to briefly clarify the relevant terms "mother tongue", "second language" and "foreign language". Since these terms are used inconsistently in the literature and are often not clearly defined, a clear conceptual definition cannot and should not be given at this stage. Rather, the following paragraph serves to review the possible meanings of these terms.

### **2.1.1 TERM LANGUAGE, SECOND LANGUAGE AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

In order to be able to accurately study and describe the processes of language acquisition, the study is carried out in the mother tongue (L1)—that is, the language that the speaker acquires in infancy "without formal training"—and the non-native language (L2) is emphasized. In the non-native language category, it is also possible to distinguish between a second language and a foreign language based on the function it performs for the learner. If (L2) has an existential socializing function for the speaker, such as the language of the country of immigration for migrants, then it is their second language; if it is not, it is called a foreign language. In the specialized literature, the terms "second" and "foreign language" are not always used in this sense,

The more intensive research is devoted to language acquisition, the more difficult it becomes to clearly distinguish between these terms, since there is more parallelism between the processes of mother tongue acquisition, second language acquisition and foreign language acquisition than originally thought. This problem becomes particularly evident in the often-drawn distinction between language acquisition and language learning.

## **2.1.2 LANGUAGE LEARNING**

If research makes a distinction between language acquisition and language learning, then the criterion for distinction is usually the context in which language acquisition takes place, on the one hand, and the type of processes that occur, on the other. If a language is acquired through natural social contact, as is the case with the development of a first language, and if subconscious, intuitive processes play a role, then this is usually called acquisition. If, on the other hand, language acquisition takes place in an institutionalized context in which learning processes are consciously controlled, then the term "language learning" is more likely to be used. As a result, native and second languages are acquired simultaneously with the study of foreign languages (at school or in other educational institutions). However, this distinction turns out to be problematic for two reasons: on the one hand, language acquisition is not limited to purely imitative learning processes, but also includes the conscious reflection of the language laws of the native or second language, which occurs before and after school). On the other hand, this distinction is based on the premise that the process of language acquisition in an institutionalized context differs from natural language acquisition, because learning processes can be specifically influenced through learning. However, this assumption has been refuted or at least revised by recent studies. The results of comparative studies have shown that the acquisition of L1 and L2 goes through the same stages of development, in fact, there is a clear parallelism between the processes associated with language acquisition and language learning. This sequence of development (with the exception of low individual student variance) is universal and cannot be "reversed by learning control", although the learning process can be accelerated through training. This suggests that language is processed by our brain along the same lines, regardless of the context in which language acquisition occurs. Thus, the differences in the development of L1 and L2 are due to the unequal learning situation in terms of the quantity and quality of linguistic information, as well as the prerequisites of the language learner that have changed mainly with age (cognitive abilities, metalinguistic awareness, motivation). and etc.) that language is processed by our brains according to the same principles, regardless of the context in which language acquisition occurs. Thus, the differences in the development of L1 and L2 are due to the unequal learning situation in terms of the quantity and quality of linguistic information, as well as the prerequisites of the language learner that have changed mainly with age (cognitive abilities, metalinguistic awareness, motivation). and etc.) that language is processed by our brains according to the same principles, regardless of the context in which language acquisition occurs. Thus, the differences in the development of L1 and L2 are due to the unequal learning situation in terms of the quantity and quality of linguistic information, as well as the

prerequisites of the language learner that have changed mainly with age (cognitive abilities, metalinguistic awareness, motivation). and etc.)

Finding out what effect these individual factors have on language learning and how they can be positively influenced by the teaching of a foreign language is the task of research in the field of language learning and language teaching. Because many factors are closely related to learner age, the question of "the effect of age on an individual's ability to acquire language remains one of the most exciting, but also the most controversial, topics in language acquisition research."

## **2.2 Reasons for educational policy**

Today's students find themselves in a changed world that offers them countless opportunities and freedoms, but at the same time can cause disorientation and uncertainty. The mission of the school is to help children navigate the modern world and equip them with the skills they need to take advantage of the opportunities of a globalized society. This includes, among other things, the teaching of well-founded foreign language skills, which are no longer the privilege of an elite social society, it is imperative to teach children foreign languages from an early age in order to adequately prepare them for the future.

"Therefore, of course, it is equally part of a child-appropriate and modern general education to educate children about the origin and meaning of such words in the context of foreign language lessons, as well as providing them with an initial communicative tool for getting to know texts. In addition to knowing a foreign language in terms of communicative action, life in a multinational country also requires tolerance and "understanding the way of life and way of thinking of other people and [their] cultural heritage" Especially in relation to the development of intercultural competence, which is designed to ensure peaceful and respectful communication with people from other nations, start early, show a positive effect: children, who already deal with foreign languages and cultures in elementary school (or earlier) clearly develop a more cosmopolitan attitude towards foreigners and learn to accept cultural diversity normally

This impartiality is one of the many characteristics of children that can be used positively in teaching a foreign language. Children in general are much easier to get acquainted with foreign languages than adults: they have fewer inhibitions on the production of speech, and they, driven by children's curiosity, make their first attempts to communicate in a foreign language, even if their speech abilities are still weak. Their joy in learning a subject in a playful and action-oriented manner opens up many forms of exercise that provide ongoing motivation to learn a foreign language but are not available to adults. Ideally, foreign language teaching should begin before the third grade, as the fear of making mistakes when speaking, as a rule, increases by the end of elementary school.

To summarize, it can be said that foreign language lessons that start early not only form “a way of thinking and behavior in relation to subsequent contact with foreign languages and cultures”, but also awaken the joy and motivation for further language learning. Thus, if early start cannot be sufficiently justified in terms of language acquisition theory, its positive effect on the affective sphere and the intensification of language learning through longer learning undoubtedly speak in favor of early foreign language teaching in primary school. No matter what, this can only look back on a short story. This work is intended only to give a brief overview of its development,

### **3.1 DIVE CONCEPT**

The main idea of the concept of immersion is to convey the subject content of learning in a foreign language, ideally by a native speaker. As a result, a foreign language is no longer a subject of study, but is used in its function as a means of communication. Immersive approaches are preferably practiced in multilingual countries such as Canada, Luxembourg or Switzerland, as they have the best conditions for successful implementation. This concept often does not work in practice due to the lack of trained specialist teachers.

#### **4 principles of teaching a foreign language suitable for elementary school**

Before explaining in more detail the specific content and goals of English lessons in primary school and the possibilities of their methodological implementation in the next chapter, three basic principles should be mentioned that must be observed when designing modern foreign language lessons in primary school.

##### **4.1 Child orientation**

As with other subjects in elementary school, foreign language lessons need to take into account the special learning requirements that children bring with them, unlike adult students. The main difference is that children may draw on less experience and, depending on adults, initially move in a limited living environment. For this reason, it is important to engage in lessons with topics taken from the children's world and therefore relevant and interesting for them. This is the only way for students to connect new content to their previous experiences and expand their existing knowledge. At the same time, children carry with them special qualities that, unfortunately, are often lost with age: they love playing activities and have a vivid imagination. If the teacher manages to prepare the content of teaching a foreign language in such a way that to fit these special characteristics of children, his students may find the lessons very motivating and continue their learning activities with perseverance and enthusiasm. This high level of intrinsic motivation has been shown to promise greater learning success. There are many games (eg Aziz says “What's on my back?” etc.) that can be used in English lessons to make language learning effective and enjoyable. Since the goal of the game is in the foreground for students, which is often different from the goal of learning, they usually do not explicitly realize the learning goal pursued by the

game. As a result, they are free from coercion to perform their duties and can impartially engage in educational activities. Particularly motivating activities in language courses also include music, arts and sports; and creative, funny, or exciting storytelling. By meaningfully integrating these activities into English lessons, the demand for language learning that is child-friendly and result-oriented can be met. artistic and sports activities; and creative, funny or exciting stories.

#### **4.2 Action orientation**

Another important principle of effective learning, applicable not only to English lessons, but to all other subjects, is action orientation. For students to learn optimally, they must be holistically and actively integrated into what happens in the classroom. By this is meant a balanced relationship between cognitive, affective and psychomotor learning, allowing the use of all the senses of the student. For English lessons, this means offering activities “in which language and action can be combined in a playful way and which are in their form appropriate to the nature of elementary school children.” One possibility that should be mentioned in this context is the Total Physical Response (TPR) method. ), designed by James Asher. It is a multisensory approach to language learning, which is ideal for teaching listening comprehension, especially at the initial stage of learning a foreign language, as well as for developing conversational skills. At the same time, new language units in connection with specific actions are initially perceived by the student only receptively, and their meaning is deduced visually. In the phase, the teacher simultaneously performs the actions that are currently being described in a foreign language. The next step is the general physical reaction of the students, who at first silently imitate the movements of the teacher, and she continues to comment on the action in a foreign language. The teacher can then gradually roll back the movements to check if the students have deciphered the meaning of the English sentences and if they can follow the prompts correctly without visual support. In the last step, students can say sentences themselves or even say them on their own and give instructions to other students in partnership or group work. This activity can be easily integrated into a game environment, such as the American game Simon Says, which is not only great for action-oriented learning, but also represents a part of the culture of the country of the language being studied. Also ideal in this context are so-called action songs that can be worked through with the TPR method, such as the well-known children's song "Head and Shoulders" or action rhymes such as "Five Little Monkeys". This teaching method is especially suitable for kinesthetic types of learners, but also helps other learners memorize foreign language content more easily.

#### **4.3 Authenticity**

The principle of authenticity is used in teaching a foreign language in two ways: when deciding what materials and texts to use in the lesson, and when choosing the

content and situations of communication that the teacher wants to develop with students.

The use of authentic texts is of great importance in teaching a foreign language, since they are parts of a foreign language reality, to which the lesson is aimed at preparing students. It is thanks to this direct reference to reality that authentic materials have a high motivating effect. At the same time, students get acquainted with the products of the culture of the countries of the studied language and the way of life of other peoples. Of course, when choosing materials, care must be taken to ensure that the level of texts does not exceed the language skills of children, otherwise language lessons will become a frustrating experience for students. However, there are many English-language songs, rhymes, counting rhymes, stories and children's fairy tales. books that are well suited for teaching a foreign language in elementary school, as they are mostly short and written in a simple way, understandable and accessible to children. Developing small, factual texts (such as menus, signs, product labels, timetables, or short newspaper clippings) is also interesting and meaningful for students. As in other areas of language learning, it makes sense to move from simple to complex here. Of course, you should work with more complex texts or authentic voice recordings only after you have acquired a basic knowledge of a foreign language. Another requirement for English lessons is the authentic use of the language. The content and communicative situations of the lesson should also be relevant and transferable to extracurricular contexts. Here we need topics from the area of \u200b\u200bchildren's interests that can serve as real reasons for talking. It plays a subordinate role whether the action situations are real or arranged at the moment; essential for the authenticity of the situation is that it is accepted by communication partners as real.

Care should also be taken to make class discussions appear unaffected, for example by asking students to answer questions in full sentences, whereas in out-of-class communication a short answer would be much more natural and sufficient. In general, the principle "message is more important than accuracy" is applied to the teaching of a foreign language. As a result, the communicative content of the student's statement is initially more important than its formal correctness - as is the case in a conversation with a native speaker. If possible, the correction of language errors should not take place directly, but in the form of corrective feedback in order to avoid demotivating students.

Everyday teaching activities also offer good opportunities for using authentic language. Repetitive actions such as greetings and farewells, praise and criticism, issuing work instructions, and expressing simple questions, wishes and requests should always be done in a foreign language. Initially, students perceive these so-called cool phrases only receptively; however, with regular use, they will soon be able to formulate simple statements and questions about what is going on in the classroom on their own



- a poster in the classroom with the most important language resources can help them do this. The ideal opportunity to use a foreign language in a subject context arises from its connection with other school subjects. Art objects are particularly suitable for interdisciplinary learning, but it is also possible to work on individual topics in a foreign language in general education disciplines. Children's books in English often provide a good basis for this.

In conclusion, second language acquisition should be started from the young ages, to simplify the process, and the need for early learning of a foreign language can be justified by the requirements of educational policy for multilingualism and the foundation of intercultural competence.

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