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FAIRY-TALE AS A TOOL FOR COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCIES DEVELOPMENT OF A PRE-SCHOOL CHILD

Summary

Ability to communicate clearly is one of the core competencies on which the attention in the education of children of preschool age is focused. Fairy-tales are rich repository of ideas and suggestions, through which we might develop and practice basic communication skills of children in an attractive way. A fairy-tale might be attractive by its fantastic space, figures, moral solution of life, often unusual situations, it offers role play and its techniques allow a pupil to take a mask of somebody else. Text of the paper deals with communicative competences, which have been defined in the context of a research-based observation on the basis of reproduction of well-known simple fairy tale with 5-6 years old children.

Key words: preschool education, research, fairy-tale, communicative competencies.

BAJKA JAKO NARZĘDZIE ROZWIJANIA KOMPETENCJI KOMUNIKACYJNYCH DZIECKA W WIEKU PRZEDSZKOLNYM

Streszczenie

Zdolność do komunikowania się jest jedną z podstawowych kompetencji, na których koncentruje się edukacja dzieci w wieku przedszkolnym. Bajki są bogatym źródłem inspiracji i pomysłów, dzięki którym możemy rozwijać i doskonalić podstawowe umiejętności komunikacyjne w interesujący sposób. Są atrakcyjne dzięki swojej fantastycznej przestrzeni, postaciom, moralnym rozwiązaniom sytuacji życiowych oraz możliwości zabawy w rolę i przyjęcia maski kogoś innego. Artykuł koncentruje się na kompetencjach komunikacyjnych w kontekście reprodukcji znanej prostej bajki z dziećmi 5-6-letnimi.

Słowa kluczowe: wychowanie przedszkolne, badania naukowe, bajka, kompetencje komunikacyjne.

Adequate pre-school education has a potential to improve the quality of life in children by supporting a child's personality development, their educational potential, and with the long-term effects on their overall performance.

The basis for interactive existence of a child in culture, in human society is the communication through certain linguistic code. The presumption of acquiring cultural literacy is the development of communicative competencies of a child in a language. A child learns the language gradually as a set of acoustic, graphic, and movement codes, which represent meanings, phenomena, and relations in an environment, where he/she lives. He acquires linguistic experiences and skills, which enable him to think, communicate, solve the problems, classify world into categories, and understand bounds of life features, etc. Language mastery is inseparable from social and cultural reality, in which it is used, while the language brings along values, traditions, attitudes, and knowledge. Thus we might state that the communication is one of important abilities, which should be developed since early childhood. A healthily communicating person is characteristic by his positive attitude towards himself, he is self-conscious, and

able to be empathetic, but also adamant. He is able to make compromises, can give a way, evaluate according to information, and listen carefully as well. Often he is open towards somebody else's opinions, and is able to manage communication and neutralise conflicts (Mydlová, 2012).

It follows that the communication is basis for overall personality development, which starts to form itself educationally in pre-school age. Therefore, a great emphasis should be given on the communicative competencies development that are related particularly on the speech, interpersonal courage implemented in a speech, and the social communication skills.

Communicative competences might be understood as abilities in the area of communication, which help us to act in the communication with another person actively. Communication is basic tool, through which a man gains and enriches new information and knowledge necessary for his life. Thus in the summary we can state that the communicative competencies are related particularly on speech, interpersonal courage implemented in the speech, and ability of social communication.

Development of knowledge and thinking simultaneously with correct expression should by one of the priority goals of kindergarten within the training of children in pre-school age for their onset of elementary school attendance. Basic assumptions for the development of communicative competencies of children in kindergartens is:

- extending and deepening of communicative competencies in educational staff;
- suggestive speech-educational environment of a kindergarten;
- mastering of cultivated literary Slovak language by educational staff;
- right speech model;
- focus on the speech development – correct expression, passive and active vocabulary, expressive skills;
- focus on the development of mutual communication;
- differentiation of abnormalities in the communication of a child from norm;
- intensive cooperation with a child's family;
- cooperation with speech-therapists, centre for special-educational counselling, and other professionals, if necessary (Mydlová, 2012).

In the development of communicative competencies, educational staff is supposed to focus on the development of all linguistic levels, i.e. morphological-syntactic (grammatical), lexical-semantic (active and passive vocabulary – level and width of vocabulary, understanding of words' meaning and their relations in sentences), phonetic-phonologic level (acoustic) level and pragmatic level (social application, social implementation of the communicative competence).

Ability to communicate clearly is one of the core competencies, on which the attention in education of children in pre-school age is definitely given.

Within the conducted educational research in Slovakia we have examined key competences of 5-6 years old children prior to the onset of their elementary school attendance in 7 categories:

- psycho-motoric competencies;
- personal competencies;
- social competencies;
- somcommunicative competencies;
- sognitive competencies;
- learning competencies;
- informational competencies (Podhájecká, Guziová, 2012).

Key competencies represent framework outcomes from pre-primary education and offer a picture of what a child is able before his entrance to the first grade of elementary school. Competencies of a child were related to the psycho-motoric, cognitive, emotional, and social dimension of a child's personality development. The research included:

- 40 kindergartens;
- 122 teachers;
- 1150 children, who were 5-6 years old.

The main research method was observation of *educational process in a kindergarten* and within it *observation of indicators* in a certain situation or while solving certain task through *semi-standardised research tool – observation sheet KM37/2/6* for 5-6 years old children from authors M. Podhájecká – K. Guziová (In: Podhájecká, 2011; Podhájecká, Guziová, 2012).

The communicative competencies are focused on two dimensions:

- Productive dimension – talking, thoughts expression;
- Receptive dimension – listening, passive reading of the pictures.

Communicative competencies have been observed on the basis of *reproduction of well-known simple fairy-tale*. *Fairy-tales are rich repository of ideas and suggestions, through which we might develop and practice basic communication skills of children in an attractive way.*



Picture 1. Dramatization of a fairy-tale influences communicative competencies in children.

A fairy-tale, either a folk one or artificial, still has a prime position in the readership of children. On the one hand, it maintains continuity with tradition and, on the other hand, by its creative processes relieves itself from a tradition. It attracts with exceptionalism of narration, disposes with a plot dynamics, various (colourful) situations, and interpersonal relations, although simplified often. Compared to other epic or dramatic genres, it is the fairy-tale, which rather solutions than conflicts and rather happy-ends, humorous solutions of life situations, and funny casting than feelings of sadness, pessimism, and hopelessness, and thus extend a space for maturity of personality and its ability for moral reflection. Sometimes also adults like to reach for works with simple philosophy of reward and punishment, however, we admit that they are far away from the life reality. The fairy-tales are for children “significant tool of under-conscious organising of feelings and fantasy, including confirmation of the humanity aspects, and in a way that corresponds with the level of their moral evaluation” (Čačka, 1999, p. 68). The tales are tool for communication with the world, offer patterns

and relations, help to create attitudes towards people, things as well as towards fantastic world. O. Čačka draws attention to the educational effect of fairy-tale, its imaginative function and possibilities of its implementation in educational process, as it contributes on the cognitive skills development. Typified or schematically rendered protagonists help to acquire attitudes, create roles, and identify with protagonists, and thus a reader verify who he is and who he would like to be become, which is a phase of self-recognition.

In the emotional dimension, a fairy-tale might contribute on imaginative-emotional abreaction of tension by re-experiencing feelings, especially these that are gnawing for a child (grief, sorrow, fear, hope, and doubt), while there comes a release of tension, feelings of guilt, that is to catharsis. Therefore the fairy-tales reading and their rendering in dramatic plays and games is more than appropriate to implement inclusive classrooms also with children with problem behaviours. By receiving and accepting model relations and ideals, a reader builds his own axiological system and personal identity. A fairy-tale acts educationally especially by the protagonists' acting, who addressed a child with something and they are awarded in the end. And this has not only a moral meaning, but also an assurance for a child that there is always a chance for success, when a man endeavours and obeys on his way the life rules towards nature and towards other people. Poetical side of a fairy-tale influence a creativity development.

In the context of a child reader a protagonist type, especially animal, plays important role. As J. Toman (2007, p. 76) states, this protagonist v allegorical, symbolic, and metaphoric rendition represents a bearer of either positive or negative human characteristics or he exemplifies acting and relations in usual life situations, and thus a story with animal protagonist become a picture of real life and world.

The fairy-tale genre is close to all children. Therefore a fairy-tale as an appropriate tool for the development of communicative competencies in children, language level of children, but also overall development of children has been used in the research. A fairy-tale for a child is a source of visions, fantasies, new words, and understanding of two worlds of good and evil. The research has examined:

- text comprehension – a child reproduces fairy-tale with comprehension;
- intelligibility – a speech is comprehensible (articulates correctly and clearly, articulates less clearly, very weak);
- continuous expression;
- fluency and independence;
- keeping a plot sequence;
- remembering a plot sequence.

Research results

Highest success rate – 91% was found in the indicator – *intelligibility of a speech*. This means that most of the children have reached in their speech adequate level of clear pronunciation of phonemes and phonemic groups.

Ability to reproduce a fairy-tale with comprehension has reached the success rate of 87%.

Ability of children to keep the plot sequence of the fairy-tale text was at the level of 85%.

Continuous expression has noticed 82% success.

Ability to reproduce the fairy-tale independently – 81%.

Ability to remember the fairy-tale text – the lowest success rate measured – 80%.

It turned out that the stimulation of memory process in children requires constant attention from kindergarten teachers.

When children were independent in reproducing, they also kept the plot sequence of the fairy-tale text and vice-versa.

Ability of independency in the text reproduction was mutually influenced with the quality of memory process in children.

Ability of continuous expression was related to the plot sequence keeping, where there was measured very strong correlation.

Between the speech intelligibility and memory processes of children was very weak correlation.

On the basis of *reproduction of well-known simple fairy-tale* have been defined *communicative competencies towards a child of pre-school age*. This means that *a child*:

- expresses and communicates own thoughts, opinion;
- reproduces announcements, texts;
- chooses appropriate way of communication due to a situation;
- communicates acquired knowledge;
- listens thoughts and information from different medias actively and with comprehension;
- leads a monologue, follows dialogue and interview with children and adults;
- expresses pre-reader literacy (Podhájecká, Guziová, 2012).

Fairy-tale develops the communicative level, which improves vocabulary, reactions to questions and formulation of answers, expressing of pleas, addressing, and flowing a dialogue. Moreover, it develops listening, pronunciation, but also a rhythm perception.

Familiarizing children with a book, learn a child to love a book, viewing it, listening fairy-tales and various stories, reading illustrations in it, narration, and reproduction of heard is important tool of communicative skills and a great input into their future life.

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