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THE USE OF RHYMES AND SONGS IN DEVELOPING FOREIGN LANGUAGE PHONETIC COMPETENCE OF JUNIOR STUDENTS

Mastering oral speech and reading aloud is generally impossible without stable auditory, pronunciation, rhythmic and intonation skills. That is why developing students' phonetic competence is one of the basic features in teaching a foreign language. Phonetic competence is an important step both in the practical mastery of the pronunciation mechanism and pronunciation rate and in the development of speaking skills. Therefore, it is important to develop phonetic skills at the primary school age in particular, since it is at this age that the student's speech and pronunciation start to develop.

The goal of the article is the theoretical analysis of factors of developing articulatory phonetic competence at the initial stage of studying EFL as well as sharing some practical experience of using songs, poems and riddles in the classroom of elementary school.

Modern methodology of teaching EFL defines phonetic competence as “... the ability of an individual to correctly articulate and intonate their utterances and understand the speech of others, which is based on a complex and dynamic interaction of relevant skills, knowledge and phonetic awareness” [4, p. 110].

At the initial stage of training, it is necessary to lay the foundation for good pronunciation, which involves correct intonation, observance of pauses, knowledge of the peculiarities of the stress of words in a sentence, as well as correct articulation. This is necessary for the normal functioning of the oral speech of students.

In teaching EFL, the essence of developing the phonetic skills consists in training sounds, sound combinations, intonation patterns and units of speech, different communicative types of sentences and a coherent text [11, p. 16].

In a non-native environment, it is problematic to achieve a completely correct pronunciation identical to the speech of a native speaker. For this reason, the goal is to achieve comparatively correct pronunciation in learners.

S. Nikolayeva gives the definition of approximate pronunciation “...as a pronunciation in which, as in literary pronunciation, there are no phonological errors,

but which, unlike literary pronunciation, allows non-phonological errors, that is, those that do not interfere with understanding oral statements and reading aloud in this language” [3, p. 112].

Teaching pronunciation in elementary school is one of the main tasks, since the basic mechanisms are formed at the initial stage of learning a foreign language, and it is easier to correct phonetic errors in the future. It is necessary to emphasize that well-formed pronunciation skills are of great importance not only in terms of speaking, but also in understanding speech, since the person who perceives information relies on sound images already known to him.

R. Ellis states that “...it is these abilities that can be considered the basis for the development of a junior schoolchild and the formation of his ability to communicate in a foreign language within the framework of a dialogue of cultures, which is one of the most important goals of foreign-language education in primary school. And the specifics of the age of the junior schoolchild is such that the success of his mastery of a new language is determined by the success of the actual learning activity” [5, p. 62].

The advantage of younger schoolchildren is also the potentially great possibilities of long-term memory, which is explained “by the presence of the phenomenon of “imprinting”, that is, absorbing of language material in the mind under the condition of the necessary motivation, stimulus. Practice, for example, proves that with the stimulation of playful or cognitive motivation and consistent orientation towards achieving the practical result of learning new material, children remember certain foreign words, phrases, language clichés, poems, song lyrics, etc. quite easily and firmly” [9, p. 25].

In our opinion, learning in the first grade creates an appropriate propaedeutic basis for the child's encounter with a foreign language in the next, second grade. It contributes to its general language development, the acquisition of skills and abilities in educational activities, social and socio-psychological orientation in the children's team and in general in human society.

The factors analyzed above prove the correctness of the introduction of a foreign language, starting from the second grade of a secondary school. At this age, children's memory is better developed, especially auditory short-term, auditory attention, ability to imitate, imitation, thinking and cognitive processes, reflection, creative imagination.

Authentic materials increase the children's level of involvement and concentration. This is the main accurate reason why rhymes and songs are the chief models of teaching basic lessons to a child in the early years of life” [6, p. 105].

Another important reason is that songs make up a powerful means of teaching English at the initial level. We can use songs as a classroom activity in order to enrich students' vocabulary or to improve their grammar and pronunciation. Since they play an important role in the process of learning and using the mother tongue, they are also quite important in the learning of any foreign language, especially for young learners.

T. Murphey considers that “songs and rhymes present a lot of linguistic material in a natural linguistic context. Words in songs and rhymes are meaningful to the learner. In general they use simple conversational language with a lot of repetition. Therefore songs and rhymes stick in the learner's mind and the words and expressions

used are memorized more easily. Besides, songs and rhymes provide many possibilities for constant repetition and revising as important mechanisms of the language acquisition [10, p. 156].

According to C. Straeter-Lietz, "... poems, rhymes, chants and songs could be used to give a feeling for the rhythm of the spoken language. Many well-known rhymes make use of the natural rhythm of the English language. Practising intonation through reciting rhymes and poems is mostly funny and very effective. To vary the sometimes boring pronunciation teaching it is a proven remedy using rhymes and rhythmic chants, e.g. with minimal pairs" [12, p. 9].

During English learning lessons, singing activities and singing rhymes and songs help to develop some skills in the students including word pronunciation and word stress. When learning a song words are related with meaning and students are more motivated" [12, p. 14].

In summary, based on the results of the implementation of the system of exercises in working with students, the proposed method of forming the phonetic competence of primary school students is effective, as it contributes to the achievement of the following results: students' vocabulary is replenished; pronunciation and intonation of utterances improves; knowledge about the culture and traditions of the country whose language is studied is enriched; the students' worldview and their cognitive interests expand; positive motivation to learn a foreign language increases.

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