

PROMOTING DIALOGUE SPEECH FOR PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN IN PROBLEM SOLVING SITUATIONS

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Abstract. *Introduction.* Forming the questions, the ability to listen to different opinions, to evaluate the problem and looking for different ways of solving it, to agree upon a commonly accepted opinion – these all are daily necessities for each person. According to the skills of a child's dialogue speech, these issues can be either more successfully or less effectively solved. During the communication process the teacher and parents can demonstrate to a child an interested, supportive position that ensures the implementation of the values of human pedagogy and develops the socio-linguistic growth of the child's personality. The empirical study examines the techniques of pedagogical work in problem-solving situations of everyday life by using productive questions. Development both of dialogue speech and successful negotiation process are closely related to adult skills that a child often imitates, and environmental conditions.

Results, conclusions. Solving negotiations about daily situations, the ability to ask and find the best possible solution during the communication process with a child can ensure a successful acquisition of the Latvian language and the child's ability to implement the dialogue speech more successfully.

Keywords: *dialogue speech, a pre-school child, problem-solving situations.*

Introduction

Dialogue is human interaction, communication, contacting, information exchange (Explanatory Dictionary of Lingvodidactic Terms, 2011: 25). Dialogue is the most natural form of oral speech. It is a speech composed of replicas, series of reactions. The situation of the speech is the one in which the addresser (speaker-sender) and the addressee (receiver-receiver) interact with each other (Anspoka, 2008: 309; Pļavenice & Skuškovnika, 2002).

The aim of the paper. To study the methods of pedagogical work, the methods for promoting dialogue speech for pre-school children and the results of promoting dialogue speech.

Materials and methods. Analysis of theoretical – literary sources. Methods of empirical research: the method of qualitative research – pedagogical observation. Data processing. (IBM SPSS Statistics 23).

The questions and answers form a dialogue, a negotiation with its characteristic structure – the participants, the exchange of information and certain results.

The questions fulfil a variety of functions. The term “question” has several meanings – it is a statement that appeals to someone in order to obtain information; it is a solvable, recognizable problem; it is a condition, a set of circumstances that binds to a definite concept which it depends on. The answer is a verbal or non-verbal reaction caused by a question, recommendation or action (Explanatory Dictionary of Lingvodidactic Terms, 2011: 15, 43; Dzintere, Stangaine, & Augstkalne, 2014: 79).

A conversation formed in a dialogue is defined as dialogue speech characterized by brief statements, a simple incomplete variety of sentences, deviations from normative syntactic constructs, a wide range of non-verbal means, choice of language resources appropriate to the speech situation and specific speech behaviour (Explanatory Dictionary of Lingvodidactic Terms, 2011: 25; Lūse, Miltiņa, & Tūbele, 2012: 75; Explanatory Dictionary of Linguistic Basic Terms 2007: 90). Dialogue, as well as dialogue speech, can be described as a conversation therefore the study uses two terms “dialogue” and “dialogue speech” which are not separated.

In the process of language acquisition, a positive emotional background is important where the child is encouraged to observe the surrounding world, to perceive its objects, living beings or phenomena in it, to perceive the names of objects, to understand their meaning in the context, listen to their sound (Anspoka, 2013: 13). A complete language acquisition is the basis for a child's active world cognition, the environment of the child also affects his language, as well as the language and behaviour of parents and teachers.

A person, regardless he is an adult or a child, finds the ways to solve a problem by himself, if he receives psychological support (Arslan, 2010; Gipenreitere, 2012: 148; Röbe, 2008).

Children discover and improve their skills thanks to the various opportunities that contribute to problem solving situations. Problem solving situations facilitate the development of a personality, promote the abilities of children, develop self-esteem and self-confidence.

Mr. Fischer points out that impulsiveness is a serious problem for learning failure. This recognition can be referred to the experience of picture viewing. The author reminds the child of the well-known saying “Do not hesitate, think” (Fisher, 2012: 168).

Discussion and results

When children take part into negotiations, their dialogue speech develops - the ability to formulate their own needs, thoughts and develop communicative skills - to find contact with a partner (Dzintere, Stangaine, & Augstkalne, 2014: 31).

R. Fischer emphasizes the importance of planning in problem solving situations. The author notes that planning learning can start already in kindergarten. If little children plan their actions, they realize that they can achieve something; they can become determiners of their lives and start making decisions by themselves. Children learn to become independent, they form a “*I can and I do*” attitude toward problems. However, the child needs adult’s help. An adult can encourage and propose ideas for the child. If a child is confused and does not deal with the problem or if he still does not know how to plan, an adult may suggest different options (Fisher, 2005: 131).

Questions play significant role in the communication process between adults and children. Questions and answers are called “dialogue situations”, which is a characteristic feature of the communication between adults and children. The question of an adult is the basis for dialogue cooperation provoking a child to react. Thus, adult questions affect *the adult-child* dialogue (Kazakovskaya, 2006).

The questions of teachers should stimulate intellect, encourage children to think. However, many questions from teachers slow down intellectual activity and prevent children the effort to think. Teachers generally ask closed-ended questions (which can be answered by a simple “yes” or “no”) about facts - questions with well-known correct answers, so the level of cognitive demand is low, which does not encourage children to think and learn (Fisher, 2005: 29).

J. Gipenreitere emphasizes that questions are more important than answers. A child may have a long and hidden reflection process in his mind on the particular question which the adult has asked and a child has got embarrassed. The question has been neglected without explaining anything and getting the correct answer. It has been ignored by the adult. (Gipenreitere, 2012: 61).

T. Babaeva and L. Rimaševska encourage the use of images in organizing the conversation and point out that the mood expressed in the picture, the explanation of the child's feelings, as well as the development of understanding of ethical values are extremely important work in order to promote cooperation skills of child (Babaeva & Rimashevskaya, 2012: 53).

In order to carry out empirical study, the criteria for the assessment of dialogue speech were developed for children and teachers (see Table 1).

Table 1 Criteria and indicators of dialogue speech

Criteria	Indicators	Communication characterization
1. Problem solving skills	1.1. Actively ask questions in problem-solving situations	Low – do not ask questions or ask them very rarely.
		Medium – the desire to support the conversation partner by asking questions is not expressed.
		Sufficient – ask inquisitive questions by changing the topic of the conversation.
		High – actively ask questions on their own initiative in problem solving situations.
	1.2. Are able to answer and base their opinions in problem situations	Low – answer poorly on the questions from the conversation partners, do not base the opinion.
		Medium – answer to questions of personal interest or importance
		Sufficient – answers questions, but not always base the opinion.
		High – answer to questions and base the opinion.
2. The teacher’s activities in promoting dialogue speech in problem-solving situations	2.1. Ask productive and provoking questions in problem-solving situations	Low – when solving problem situations, children are asked closed-ended questions.
		Medium – ask more closed-ended questions, less productive and provoking questions in problem solving problem situations.
		Sufficient – ask productive questions in problem solving situations, but do not always spend enough time to provide the child with the answer.
		High – helps the child to acquire successful problem-solving skills by asking productive and provoking questions.

The study involved 40 senior preschool children and 4 pre-school teachers. The results were obtained during the observation, conversations, statements, as well as non-verbal forms of communication (mimicry, gestures) and emotional mood (voice intonation) of children and teachers were recorded in the observation protocol.

In order to comply with the principle of confidentiality, a coded system of large and small printers is used during the study therefore the names of children and teachers are not mentioned.

As a result of data processing by using the SPSS program (IBM SPSS Statistics 23), the statistics of each criterion and division of frequency was observed. The arithmetic mean represents the average score obtained (see Table 2).

Table 2 Characteristic activities of teachers and statistical data of indicators in promoting children's dialogue speech

Criteria	Indicators	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Number (Valid)
1.Problem-solving skills	1.1.Actively ask questions in problem- solving situations	2,70	,723	40
	1.2.Are able to answer and base their opinions	2,58	,747	40
2.Teacher’s activities in promoting dialogue speech in problem-solving situations	2.1.Ask productive and provoking questions in problem-solving situations	2,88	,757	4

According to the obtained data, it was concluded that the ability to answer and base their opinions in problem solving situations is the lowest rated ability with 2,58 points from the maximum 4, while the ability of teachers to ask productive and provoking questions in problem-solving situations was assessed by 2,88 points.

In order to find out the level of children's dialogue speech skills and possible causes, the evaluation and analysis of the results of the criteria were performed (see Figure 1).

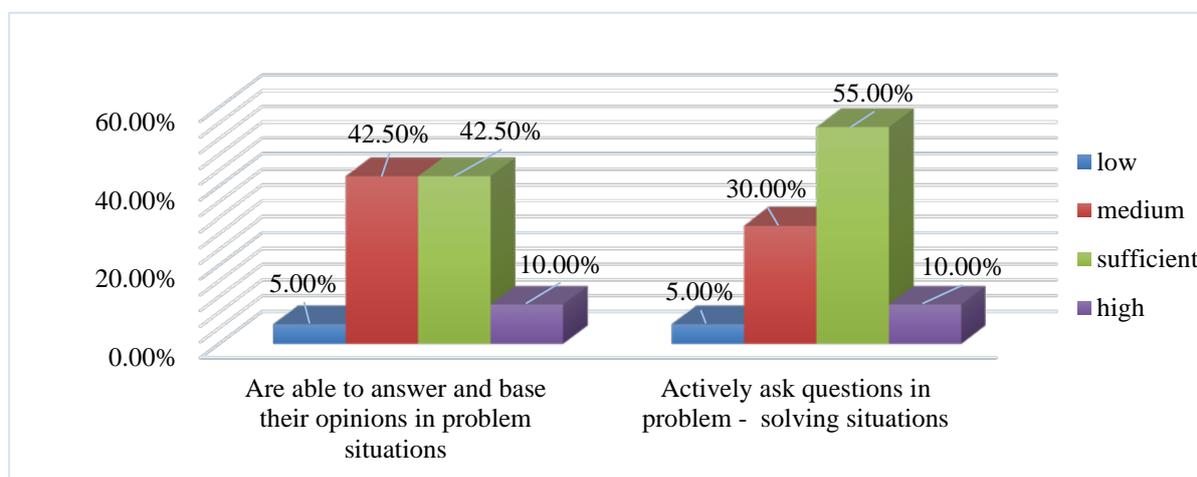


Fig.1. Problem solving skills

As shown in Figure 1, active questioning is the highest rated skill in problem solving situations. 55 % (22 children) of participants have been found to be sufficient, they ask questions they are interested in by changing the topic of the conversation, 5 % (2 children) have low level, children do not ask questions or ask very rarely.

Whereas a sufficient level of 42.5 % (17 children) have been found to be able to answer and base their opinion in problem solving situations. 5 % (2 children) have shown a low level; this would definitely require the assistance of a teacher, as often the communication skills are determined by the conflicting child's self-confidence as well as the problem solving situation is impeded by the lack of knowledge and experience.

A summary of the levels of activity of the 4 teachers involved in the study to promote dialogue speech for the criteria and indicators developed for the problem solving situations are illustrated in Figure 2 (see Figure 2).

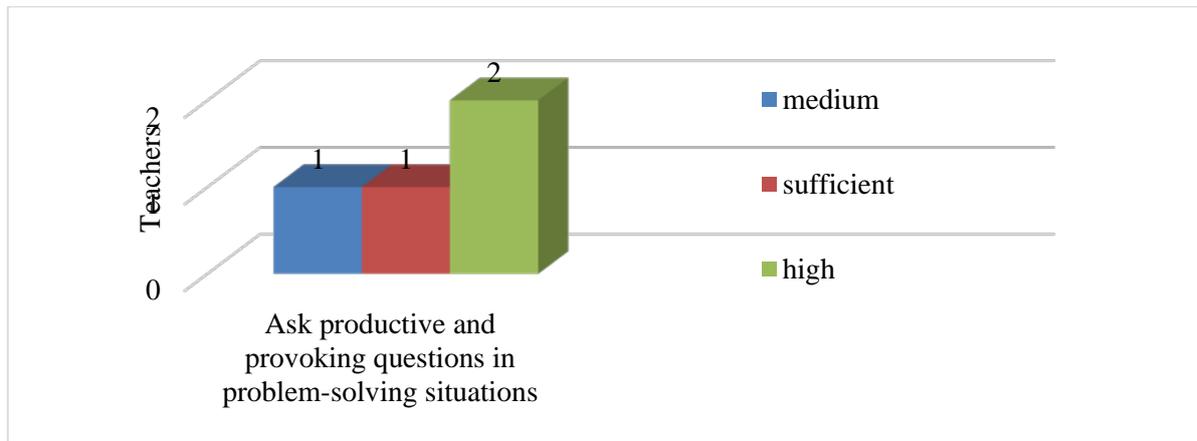


Fig.2. Characteristic levels of the teacher's activity in promoting dialogue speech in problem solving situations

Following the scoreboard, it is concluded that none of the 4 participating teachers has a low level of dialogue in helping to solve problem situations. Teacher's responsiveness and assistance contribute to the skill of solving the problem situation. This observation is illustrated by an example:

Following the results collected, it is concluded that none of the 4 participating teachers has a low level in promoting dialogue speech in problem solving situations. Responsiveness and assistance of the teacher develop the skill to solve problem situations. This observation is illustrated by the following example:

Children are preparing for breakfast, washing their hands. Sm (6 years, 7 months) is blaming Jm that she (6 years, 5 months) has taken Sm's towel and had wiped her hands in it, but Jm had checked the picture on a towel rack, so basically she did not make a mistake. Towels were put in wrong places. And the girls had made mistakes by themselves.

Sm: You took my towel!

Jm: No, it was on my hook. I did not know.

B: Girls, you made mistakes by yourselves, so you accidentally mixed the places of your towels (to make sure the towels are in the right places, the girls removed all the towels from the hooks and put them back according to the pictures).

In order to determine if there is a statistically significant relationship between the evaluation criteria of children's dialogue speech and the promotion of teacher-friendly dialogue in problem solving situations, a correlation analysis was performed during the research phase. As the group (n = 40) is small the Pearson correlation coefficient was chosen to calculate the results, and in this case, the specific features of the empirical distribution do not limit the use of this coefficient (see Table 3).

Table 3 Correlation analysis between teachers' activity in promoting dialogue speech in problem solving situations and development of children's dialogue speech

Criteria indicators		Ask productive and provoking questions in problem-solving situations
1.1. Actively ask questions in problem situations	Pearson correlation coefficient	,632**
	Significance	,000
1.2. Are able to answer and base their own opinions in problem situations	Pearson correlation coefficient	,583
	Significance	,000

Analysing the results obtained, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant correlation between the implementation of a teacher-child dialogue speech. As all the coefficients in Table 3 are positive, it means that the coherence is direct, i.e. as the values of one characteristics grow up, the values of another characteristics also grow up moderately, and vice versa.

On the basis of the theoretical part of the study, the pedagogical trial activity for the children aged 5 -7 was performed according to their level of dialogue speech and teachers' professional skills. As a result two pedagogical techniques for promoting children's dialogue speech were implemented (see Table 4).

Table 4 Pedagogical techniques for promoting dialogue speech, exercises performed and pedagogical tools

Stage	Pedagogical technique	Tasks performed	Pedagogical tool
1.	Acquaintance of image content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To promote the ability to ask inquiring questions on a thematic picture - To promote the ability to answer the question on a thematic picture. - To promote the ability to use question words and pronouns. 	An interactive game “Listen and Speak” for pre-school and primary school children.
2.	A conversation about ways how to deal with a real problem situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To promote the ability to ask questions actively in problem situations. - To facilitate the ability to answer questions in problem situations and base the opinion. - To develop the ability not to interrupt the conversation partner. - To encourage expressing a favourable attitude to the conversation partner. - To promote the ability to accept different thoughts and a different opinion. 	Pedagogical observations

When planning the work of promoting children's dialogue speech, it is important to follow the level of development of children's dialogue speech and to choose an appropriate topic for the development of children's dialogue speech. Pedagogical techniques were organized systematically so that the acquired skills of speech are not forgotten. When planning work and choosing pedagogical techniques to promote dialogue speech, the principle of consistency was observed, from the simplest to the most complicated.

In the first phase, the main task was to enhance the ability to ask inquiring questions of the content and to give answers for a thematic picture. The children were offered various thematic pictures from the interactive study material “Listen and Speak” (Latvian Language Agency, 2013), which was grouped in 6 topics.

At this phase, children were urged to ask questions about the illustrated picture and give answers; then by using the symbols of question and exclamation marks, listen to the questions and answers offered. This is illustrated by the example of the picture - November 18 (see Table 5).

Table 5 Summary of questions and answers on the picture – November 18

Children's questions and answers	Proposed questions and answers
<i>Kz (6 years, 8 months old): What colour is the Latvian flag?</i>	<i>Question: What colours are there in the Latvian flag?</i>
<i>Tz (6 years, 5 months old): Red and White.</i>	<i>Answer: There are red and white colours in the Latvian flag.</i>
<i>Kz: What is this?</i>	<i>Question: How is this monument called?</i>
<i>Tz: A monument. Kz: I would say the Freedom Monument.</i>	<i>Answer: It is the Freedom Monument.</i>
<i>Kz: Why are the flowers laid out there?</i>	<i>Question: What is at the foothill of the monument?</i>
<i>Tz: Congratulate Latvia?</i>	<i>Answer: There are wreaths and flowers at the foothill of the monument.</i>
<i>Kz: What is the girl's hands?</i>	<i>Question: What is the girl holding in her hands?</i>
<i>Tz: A candle?</i>	<i>Answer: The girl is holding candles in her hands.</i>

Kz's questions and Tz's answers were very similar to the ones offered, after hearing the question and the answer, the boys tried to remember what their question and answer were, they were happy that the questions and answers were very similar to the ones offered. Tz answer intonation was like questions, perhaps because Tz was not sure whether the answer was correct. Both boys showed interest and continued to ask questions and give answers on the picture.

Further the girls Km (6 years, 8 months) and Sm (6 years, 6 months) joined them, they chose the picture from the home topic - in the children's room. After this picture, the children acquired not only the ability to ask questions and to answer, but also to use prepositions (see Table 6).

Table 6 Summary of questions and answers about the picture in the children's room

Children's questions and answers	Proposed questions and answers
<i>Km: Where are the trousers?</i>	<i>Question: Where are the trousers?</i>
<i>Sm: In the bed.</i>	<i>Answer: The trousers are on the bed.</i>
<i>Km: Where is the bed?</i>	<i>Question: What is under the bed?</i>
<i>Sm: At the closet, under the carpet, no, on the carpet.</i>	<i>Answer: Under the bed is a carpet.</i>
<i>Km: Where is the shelf?</i>	<i>Question: Where is the shelf?</i>
<i>Sm: At the bed. No the shelf is at the bed.</i>	<i>Answer: The shelf is at the wall.</i>

After asking and answering questions, the girls were invited to listen to the questions and answers they asked. Km asked a question that was not similar to the one offered - Where is the bed? However, it was not wrong. This is illustrated by an example:

After asking and answering questions, the girls were asked to listen to the questions and answers offered. Km asked a question which was not similar to the one offered – Where is the bed? However, it was not wrong. This is illustrated by an example:

Km: This first one was very accurate to us.

Sm: Yes, but about the bed was completely wrong.

The girls were explained that the questions about one thing, one subject can be different, so they are not wrong. The girls listened enthusiastically to the following questions and answers.

Further Jz's (6 years, 3 months) and Em's (6 years, 5 months) questions and answers given on the thematic picture – a holiday in the toy store. This is illustrated by an example (see Table 7).

Table 7 Summary of questions and answers about the picture in the toy store

Children's questions and answers	Proposed questions and answers
<i>Jz: What is the seller taking out of the shelf?</i>	<i>Question: What is the seller from the shelf?</i>
<i>Em: A puzzle</i>	<i>Answer: The seller is taking out the puzzle.</i>
<i>Jz: What is the boy keeping in his arms?</i>	<i>Question: What is the boy playing with?</i>
<i>Em: The boy is keeping a plane in the his hands.</i>	<i>Answer: The boy is playing with the plane.</i>
<i>Jz: What colours are on the ball?</i>	<i>Question: What colours do the ball have?</i>
<i>Em: Should I say all? Red, yellow, green, dark blue and light blue.</i>	<i>Answer: The ball is yellow, red, light blue, green and dark blue.</i>
<i>Jz: Who is sitting in the plane?</i>	<i>Question: What colours do the plane have?</i>
<i>Em: People are sitting in a plane.</i>	<i>Answer: The plane is white and green.</i>

Also in this example, Jz asked a different question than it was suggested, however it was not wrong.

In the second stage of the pedagogical pilot activity the previously observed and obtained problem situations were used. The teacher paid a special attention to the problems encountered, together with the children immediately conducted a conversation about their causes, the process of solution and the desired result, demonstrated to children how to solve the problem situations successfully and how to respond to them. The pedagogical technique described above is illustrated by an example:

In the morning Km's (6 years, 9 months) dad put a gift for every child in each locker - a children's electronic clock. Mm (6 years, 7 months) has not arrived

at kindergarten, but her gift was also put in her locker. When preparing for a walk, the teacher notices that Az (6 years, 5 months) has two clocks in his hands.

Teacher: Az, why do you have two clocks? Did anyone give you theirs?

Az: No! I had.

Teacher: But each child had only one clock. Where did you get it?

Az: I took it from the Mm's locker because she is not at the kindergarten today.

Teacher: You mustn't do it under no circumstances. You took the Mm gift from her locker without permission. Immediately put it back!

Az: Oh! Ok, ok (angry puts the clock back in the Mm locker).

After analysing pedagogical, psychological, philosophical and linguistic cognitions about the development of children's dialogue speech and evaluating the results of the pedagogical pilot activities and the survey results collected from the teachers, recommendations for them were made in promoting dialogue speech for the children aged 5 to 7 in problem-solving situations and during watching illustrations in books:

- Suggest appropriate topics for the development of children's dialogue speech.
- Make a natural conversation of the speech with the children on a daily basis, providing a sensitive interaction with them, by working together and talking.
- Watch carefully how the children deal with problem situations by themselves and wait if necessary, and only then take a part in solving the situation.
- Pay a special attention to the development of children's speech, as well as to all other psychological processes, since the learning begins with the reception and memorization of information.

Conclusions

- The communicative purpose of the dialogue, the aim, the content of the dialogue, the dialogue process itself and its result form a unified structure of a dialogue.
- Implementing a successful problem-solving skill through productive and provoking questions at an early age will lay the foundations for the child's future life and his or her relationship with the world.
- One of the conditions for successful language acquisition is the sample of the speech of a teacher and other adult, their speech culture as well as an active, free, consciously planned environment where the child learns to form

an attitude towards himself and the world where the perceptions and values of the surroundings are obtained.

- The children's dialogue speech skills have improved in all criteria fields developed; the highest assessed skill is to change the voice volume, the pace of speech according to the situation, which is implemented by 33 children from 40 involved in the study. The lowest-rated ability is not to disturb the conversation partner, the average level is 5, sufficient – 31, and high for 4 children. At the end of the study, it has been concluded that none of the participants involved in the study has a low level of dialogue speech.

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