

# Interactive Ways of Teaching Languages to School Children

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**Abstract:** This article is devoted to the explanation of new methods of teaching a foreign language, i.e. English at primary schools. It contains some facts and researchers' experience, as well. Revealing the drawbacks of the current educational system in language sphere, the author suggests some fruitful ways of teaching language to young pupils.

**Keywords:** teaching English a second language (TESL); foreign language; grammatical construction; communication; games; pragmalinguistic formulas (PLF); lesson; vocabulary.

## INTRODUCTION

It so happened that in the modern elementary school, English turned out to be one of the most difficult subjects. And it is difficult in the classroom, not only for children, but also for the teachers.

On the one hand, I really want to help children, inculcate interest and love for a new language, teach them to speak and understand foreign language. On the other hand, it is very difficult to work under conditions of constant pressure from upcoming verification work, multi-level and numerous groups, and incomplete homework.

None of the existing textbooks and manuals meets the requirements by totally, and experienced teachers have to look for new and combine the best aspects in the existing ones. Most textbooks, unfortunately, are composed in such a way that an unprepared child is simply not able to complete the task on his own, without any outside help. And parents often either cannot or do not have time to help their children. So it turns out that the lessons of a foreign language turn into a dialogue of frustrated teachers with uncertain children and dissatisfied parents in the background. But is it all hopeless? And is it possible to change anything?

To the methodologists and teachers working in the framework of new projects, it seems that it is possible! And I propose to slightly shift the emphasis and try to teach English in a new way!

### 1. Speak in English all that you can say in your native language!

15 years ago, for the first time, the Russian philologist and methodologist Inna Givental proposed to change the direction in which the process of learning a foreign language traditionally begins to the opposite and expand the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary of the English language, starting not from an unfamiliar foreign language, but from the familiar native language. For the most common grammatical constructions of the English language, she developed equivalents in Russian and called them pragmalinguistic formulas, or abbreviated PLF.

1. In these 15 years, Inna's first book, How to Say It in English, has been reprinted 17 times already! In addition, her other textbooks, developed in accordance with the principles of

this new educational technology, were published ("How to be surprised and indignant in English", "Grammar simulator", "Speech simulator", etc.) [1. p. 431]

It seemed to me that this kind of training could be even more effective for classes with children than for adults. And, having received Inna's full approval and support, some researchers decided on a large-scale multi-year experiment. For several years, Russian researchers observed preschool and primary school age children and recorded what they say in everyday life. It turned out that the PLF, which they use regularly, is not very much (only 42). For each of them, they came up with a capacious symbolic pattern, and they made special cards. Each card is one or another speech situation in which the child finds himself in everyday life most often.

### 2. Talk about what is interesting and necessary for you!

Children are extreme egocentrics; this is part of their nature and natural development. Therefore, the endless conversations about "about him", about the unknown John Smith, who lives in the UK, quickly tire them and discourage interest in learning.

Instead of telling the kids "how everything is arranged with them" (both from the point of view of reality, and from the point of view of grammar), it can be suggested giving children the opportunity to talk about themselves (only in English)! After all, language is not a science and not a system of rules, it is a way of communication. So, starting to learn a foreign language, the first thing teachers have to do is satisfy the communicative hunger of young students!

What is the point of talking about London (which is somewhere very far away) if a child cannot say such sentences he needs in his daily life, like "I want to play with you", "I am tired", "Come here", "Let's ride riding bikes together", "I don't want to eat this porridge". [2. pp. 10-15.]

Teachers build the entire trajectory of learning a foreign language in their classes as if from the first person, starting from the natural speech needs of younger students.

### 3. Everything is clear from the first lesson!

The school is considered to be a preparation for life. And primary school, in general, as preparation for preparation. In this regard, during this period, children are often invited to learn the knowledge that they cannot use now, but, presumably, they can use it later (for example, to

learn all three forms of irregular verbs, despite the fact that at this age not all children they even mastered Past Simple, not to mention Present Perfect, for which, strictly speaking, they need the third form of the verb).

This approach seems to me wrong. Every good teacher knows that it is possible to deal with children effectively and fruitfully only with what they are interested in, important and understandable right now!

This is what wise teachers do in their lessons! They try to give any new vocabulary only in the context of pragmalinguistic formulas developed, understood and necessary by the children themselves. What difference does the cushion or sideboard mean in English if the child also uses these words extremely rarely or even never in Uzbek. Each of their Formula Cards helps the child to express one or another of their own emotions, voice the desire, ask your question!

#### **4. At first we speak, and then we write.**

People of different countries speak their languages for many centuries. They express their thoughts, listen to each other, argue or support the other person, joke or interrupt. And only in the last hundred years the ability to read and write has also become the property of the general public. Because any language is an audio system, and letters are just a way to fix familiar words and phrases on paper.

Why does the study of a foreign language begin with the letters and rules of reading?

In the native language, each concept is associated with a whole range of sounds, smells, sensations, memories. Why, trying to expand the vocabulary of children in foreign words, they are offered only such a poor and dry association as a sequence of letters?

It seems to me very important to ensure that children first recognize and feel a foreign language with their ears and lips (that is, learn to speak and listen), and only then begin to study writing and reading. After all, no one will deny that the result of studying the language “through the eyes” almost always becomes “dumb knowledge” (I can read, but I cannot say anything.)

In most lessons, teachers have been teaching children only a year to speak! Thanks to the Formula Cards during this time, they manage to master several times in the English verb (Present Progressive, Future Simple, Present Simple), to be constructions, modal verb can, constructs with have, want, like verbs, plural nouns and many others! Children translate whole texts from Uzbek into English and invent their own fairy tales using their knowledge and skills.

And only after that we begin to learn to read and write. Moreover, having such a diverse colloquially grammatical base, children learn to write and read at breakneck speed (in just a few months).

#### **5. We learn language through the game**

Franz Lezer, in his book “Memory Training,” argued that the only thing we know about memory is that you cannot remember anything head-on. Memory refuses to

work when you try to remember something “in the forehead.”

And the well-known Austrian psychologist, neurologist and psychiatrist Victor Frankl suggested treating people not only from not remembering, but even from neurotic diseases - with a paradoxical intention - that is, with the intention to do something other than what they supposedly should have done.

As Valery Kurinsky wrote in his “Auto-didactics”: “The effectiveness of education can increase markedly if we build an activity educational process on regularities that are not yet mastered by pedagogy, but no less objective and effective. First of all, I mean the law of paradoxical intentions of Frankl-Kura. The meaning of the law is that not really the information that the efforts is focused on is really assimilated and appropriated for a long time, but that which is incidental, arises spontaneously, in between cases. The same information that meets the goal, and to the assimilation of actions is directed, gets only into short-term memory and is quickly forgotten.” [3. pp.17-19,23-24.]

After analyzing the theoretical calculations of teachers and psychologists of previous generations, and continuing to monitor modern children, I was convinced that the only truly effective method of learning the reality for children is a game.

Therefore, instead of forcing children to write vocabulary dictations or respond to the evaluation of jagged dialogues, dozens of role-playing and board games have been created.

Playing them, children naturally find themselves in a situation where they need to ask a specific question, answer it, or simply say a particular sentence. Changing roles and modifying their games, teachers bring the skills of children to automatism, without even setting them the task, to learn or remember something.

#### **6. “Thin” and “thick” questions during the lessons.**

The table of “thin” and “thick” questions can be used at any of the three stages of the lesson. If I use this student’s survey stage, these will be the questions that our pupils would like to get answers when they study the topic. Students are invited to formulate questions to the topic in the form of “thin” and “thick” questions. Next, I write down a number of questions on the board and ask the students (individually or in groups) to try to answer them, arguing their assumptions. In the course of working with the table, questions that require a simple one-syllable answer are recorded in the left column. The right column contains questions requiring a detailed, clear answer or questions that they themselves cannot yet answer, but would like to answer. After the answers to these questions, students are invited to read or listen to the text, to find confirmation of their assumptions and answers to “thin” and “thick” questions. [4. pp. 7-16]

At the stage of comprehension of the context the reception serves to actively fix the questions in the course of reading, listening with the reflection to demonstrate an understanding of the

past. At the stage of reflection the task is to compose further 3-4 “thin” and “thick” questions put them in a table, work with questions in pairs, choose the most interesting questions that can be asked from the whole class. For example:

- Where?
- Who?
- How?
- Why do you think that it was dangerous?
- How do they differ? etc.

The module “New approaches in teaching and learning” allows you to improve the effectiveness of the lesson, because interactive learning is necessary at all stages of the lesson in order to track the productive and dynamic development of children.

Feedback from each student orients the teacher to provide timely assistance to all students in need, and allows you to completely eliminate gaps in the knowledge and skills of students. In this connection, I apply various strategies of formative and summative assessment, in order to be able to receive from each student continuous information about the state of his cognitive process, understanding what is explained. Based on the information received, I corrected the cognitive process until all students fully understood the essence of the explained material.

In order to develop my students' self-assessment and self-control skills, I use the following forms of work in my lessons:

- mutual review of works;
- Group assessment;
- the estimated activity of the student as a teacher;
- various types of self and mutual tests.

The inclusion of children in the assessment of the result achieved by them plays a crucial role in shaping their critical attitude to the result obtained, drawing up the correct idea of the level of their abilities in learning.

For example, in order to inculcate the skills of self-regulation in children, I use tasks with tests of different levels in the lessons. Upon completion of the work, I post the keys of the test tasks on the board. Students check each other for keys and evaluate. For the formation of self-esteem skills, I distribute assessment sheets with criteria developed in conjunction with students. After completing these tasks, the children see their mistakes. Every student who has had mistakes comes to the conclusion that he has yet to work on what questions in order to prevent mistakes in the future. But despite the fact that the majority of children do a good job, there are children who find it difficult to work on the evaluation sheet. I offered to discuss the difficulty that arose, after which the children came to a unanimous decision - it is necessary to establish a creative group “Smart” in the classrooms, consisting of more successful students, in order to help classmates to overcome the learning difficulties that arise. After that, students who had difficulty contacting classmates for help received the necessary advice and were also able to cope with this task, which I was very pleased with.

I conduct the assessment at each stage of the lesson using different strategies. These are “Traffic Light”, “From the Fist to 5 Fingers”, “Figure”, “Oscar” and others, using ready-made criteria, or criteria made with students.

Thus, the students completed the assignment in a pair, in a group or individually, the rest appreciated the work. Here is a feedback, there is an opportunity to see if all students understand the material being studied.

At the end of the lesson, I apply various strategies for receiving feedback such as: Success Tree, Suitcase, Meat Grinder, Bucket, Free Letter.

Fortunately, children at this age do not get bored for a long time to play the same games and sing the same songs, because everyone wants to try himself as a presenter.

All in all, teaching a little child is not an easy task. Making use of the methods suggested above every teacher can get high results in their career.

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