

## Improving Preschoolers' Social Communication Through Bilingualism

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### Abstract

*This article discusses the role of family, school, and community in improving social and communicative competence in preschool education through bilingualism, teaching children to communicate in a second language through daily activities and games, as well as the issue of language acquisition in a natural environment through poems, stories, and songs, and the development of children's problem-solving, collaboration, and creative thinking skills for cognitive and social development.*

**Keywords:** Communication, education, bilingual, second language, educator, social, cognitive.

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### 1. Introduction

In our republic, large-scale reforms are being implemented to modernize the education system, organize all its stages on the basis of advanced foreign experiences and modern scientific approaches. In particular, methodological approaches to the formation of socio-communicative competence of students in the process of improving the preschool education system are recognized as one of the important directions of state policy. In this regard, the issue of developing children's language competence, communication culture and social activity through bilingualism is of priority importance. In particular, the creation of conditions for the comprehensive intellectual, moral, aesthetic and physical development of preschool children, increasing the coverage of children with quality preschool education, introducing innovations, advanced pedagogical and information and communication technologies into the preschool education system were identified as priority tasks. This expands the possibilities of creating a bilingual educational environment in the process of developing socio-communicative skills in preschool

children, through which they can scientifically improve the methodology for developing language culture, expressing one's own thoughts, establishing effective communication with others, and developing cooperation skills.

Scientific research aimed at developing socio-communicative skills in preschoolers through bilingualism is also being consistently conducted in leading scientific centers and higher education institutions around the world. In particular, modern theoretical and methodological research on issues of bilingual education, multilingualism, intercultural communication and early communicative development is being conducted in prestigious educational centers such as Harvard Graduate School of Education (USA), University College London – Institute of Education (UK), University of Toronto – Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (Canada), University of Jyväskylä (Finland), Universität Heidelberg (Germany), Université de Genève (Switzerland), Seoul National University (South Korea) and Moscow State Pedagogical University (Russia). Also, international research conducted by

UNESCO and OECD (in particular, the “Education for Multilingualism and Intercultural Understanding” project) shows the global importance of developing social and communicative competence through bilingualism at the preschool stage.

As a result of research conducted in preschool educational organizations around the world on the formation of socio-communicativeness in children through bilingualism, a number of scientific, theoretical and practical achievements have been achieved: technologies for organizing a bilingual educational environment have been improved based on harmonization with international pedagogical cooperation mechanisms (Harvard Graduate School of Education, USA); processes for forming socio-communicative competence in children in the preschool education system have been developed based on pan-European psycholinguistic needs and an active approach (University of Jyväskylä, Finland); a translanguaging model and intercultural communication technologies aimed at increasing the social activity of the child's personality in bilingualism have been developed (University College London, Great Britain); integrative linguodidactic modules have been created to support the speech development of children in a bilingual environment (University of Geneva, Switzerland); project-constructive methods suitable for a bilingual environment have been developed to improve the professional training of educators (Seoul National University, South Korea); Psychological and pedagogical mechanisms for developing a culture of communication, empathy, and tolerance in children have been improved based on cognitive and emotional integration (Miyagi Pedagogical University, Japan); principles of synchronizing the processes of socio-communicative development in a bilingual environment with an object-oriented approach have been developed (Moscow State Pedagogical University, Russia).

In leading higher educational institutions, research centers and preschool educational organizations around the world, scientific research is being conducted in the following main areas to improve the methodology for forming social communicative competence in students through bilingualism: measuring and optimizing the quality of a bilingual educational environment, identifying indicators of a bilingual environment, developing criteria for enriching the environment, studying the relationship between bilingualism and cognitive skills, improving the methodology of

pedagogical interventions in the process of bilingual education and communication, forming social cooperation, intercultural dialogue and communicative competence, improving the bilingual communication environment through media and multimodal means.

In the national education system of Uzbekistan, socio-communicative development is considered one of the priority areas of comprehensive education of the individual. Because the formation of communicative competencies in children at all stages of education, in particular, starting from the preschool period, is a determining factor in their further intellectual and social development.

The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Education” also defines the continuity of the educational process and the comprehensive development of the individual as a priority task. This demonstrates the need to implement the socio-communicative development of students at the stage of preschool education and upbringing in a continuous and systematic manner, relying on modern methodological approaches.

At the same time, theoretical and practical observations show that the insufficient formation of socio-communicative development in preschool children is one of the most common problems today. The psychological aspect of this situation is observed in the difficulties of children in perceiving and adequately expressing their emotions, excessive shyness or, conversely, aggressive behavior, while the pedagogical aspect is explained by the insufficient consideration of individual psychological differences of children in educational programs, the limitations of educators in using modern communicative methods, and the lack of effective cooperation with parents. Below we will dwell on the content of these features.

In the literature on the subject, speech defects include incorrect pronunciation of sounds, limited vocabulary, incorrect construction of grammatical structures, or shyness in entering into communication among children.

The social and communicative formation of a child's personality during preschool education is directly dependent on a number of individual and external factors. In particular, the child's inability to freely express his thoughts, difficulties in speech development, aggressive behavioral reactions, and excessive passivity significantly complicate the development of social relationships.

Speech development defects are one of the central factors in the child's social activity, causing students with limited speech abilities to encounter more difficulties in communicating with their peers. That is, they are observed to be shy when starting a conversation, limited to short answers, or completely silent. Therefore, such children are often characterized by a passive social role.

There is also a possibility that aggressive behavior is associated with speech and social limitations. In the model of social information processing, expressed in the studies of K.A. Dodge, it is emphasized that the child's misinterpretation of signals during communication, especially when language capabilities are low, increases aggressive attitudes.

Passive behavior is also one of the important factors slowing down socio-communicative development, such children often refuse to start a conversation, are limited to short and simple answers, or communicate through non-verbal means. As a result, they are deprived of the opportunity to enrich social experience.

Based on these analyses, it can be concluded that difficulties in speech development, aggressiveness, passivity, and insufficient emotional expression significantly slow down the process of socio-communicative development in preschool children.

Psychological factors such as children's mental development, perception, thinking skills, and working with emotions and feelings can negatively or positively affect speech development.

In addition, emotional factors play a special role in determining the child's speech activity. J. Bruner's research proves that children who have emotional support are relatively active in the communication process, which leads to their faster development of socio-communicative skills. On the contrary, it is emphasized that anxiety, fear or aggression in the person of the foster child negatively affects the child's free expression of his or her thoughts. Thus, speech development is not only a biological process, but also a process based on a complex set of psychological factors. The harmony of mental, perceptual, thinking and emotional processes ensures the effective formation of a child's speech. Therefore, we consider it necessary to comprehensively take into account these factors when developing socio-communicative skills in preschool educational organizations.

Also, the literature on the subject emphasizes that the

development of perceptual features in a child is also of decisive importance in the acquisition of speech units. In particular, J. Piaget stated that the higher the level of perception and perception of the environment in a child, the more effectively he will master the speech system [88-b]. On the contrary, the slowness of perceptual development creates difficulties at the phonetic and semantic levels. Thus, the formation of speech in children is a multifaceted psychological process, the foundation of which is mental development, perception, thought processes, emotional state and control of emotions. These factors determine the speed of the child's language acquisition, the level of use of speech units, and his effectiveness in the communication process. Thus, speech development is not only a biological process, but also a process based on a complex set of psychological factors. The harmony of mental, perceptual, thought and emotional processes ensures the effective formation of a child's speech. Therefore, we believe that it is necessary to comprehensively consider these factors when developing socio-communicative skills in preschool educational organizations.

There are also cases when the cooperation between parents and teachers is insufficient, which negatively affects the development of social and communicative skills in children. Preschool age is a fundamental period in the socialization of a person and the formation of communicative competencies. In this process, the interaction between the closest social environment in a child's life - the family and the educational institution - plays an important role. Psychological and pedagogical research shows that if the cooperation between parents and teachers is insufficient, various difficulties arise in the child's socio-emotional development, in particular, in the formation of socio-communicative qualities: Firstly, the slowness of speech development is the result of the parents' lack of sufficient communication and emotional support for the child. This situation is based on U. Bronfenbrenner's view in the ecological systems theory that "the child's development is directly dependent on the interaction of subjects in the microenvironment close to him (parents, teachers)". That is, the development of the child's personality is directly dependent on the interaction of family members and educators, and their cooperation serves to accelerate the child's socio-communicative, speech and emotional development. On the contrary, the weakness or "breakdown" of cooperation can cause difficulties in the child's adaptation to the environment of the preschool educational organization, communicative weakness and

emotional instability.

Secondly, if the educator and parents do not form a single educational direction for the child, the child will encounter contradictory behavior patterns in different situations. This situation can lead to the child's emotional instability and confusion in assuming social roles.

Thirdly, in conditions where the cooperation of parents and educators is insufficient, the child may have difficulties in managing his emotions and controlling aggression. In children who do not have sufficient emotional development, it is understood that the formation of communicative competencies is weak.

Fourth, the lack of formation of social competencies can lead to the child being passive in group activities, avoiding communication, and not being able to cooperate. This negatively affects not only communicative, but also cognitive development in preschoolers. Vygotsky's theory of the "zone of proximal development" shows that cooperation with adults and peers is of decisive importance in the development of a child.

Today, the proportion of people speaking two or more languages continues to grow around the world. Such adults and children are called bilingual or polyglots. In this case, the acquisition of a second language, as a rule, is characterized by the fact that the process is based on extensive oral communication practice, rather than relying on linguistic laws.

Research on the development of bilingualism for preschool children in the educational system of European countries, in particular Finland and Scandinavia, demonstrates many scientific methodological approaches. These experiments are mainly aimed at strengthening socio-communicative skills and forming intercultural sensitivity, and games, translanguaging (freely and flexibly using the child's entire existing language repertoire to acquire knowledge, exchange ideas and communicate), and socio-cultural integrative activities are widely used.

The role of game activity in the development of preschool education has been studied by many scientific schools. In particular, the cultural-historical concept of L.S. Vygotsky, D.B. Elkonin's game theory and game approaches in modern pedagogical psychology provide a deep foundation for this process. Pragmatic speech skills are an automated form of practical behavior related to the use of language for social purposes, the selection of

words and expressions appropriate to the context of communication, and taking into account the emotional state of the interlocutor. In the context of a bilingual environment, these skills can cover the following areas: constructing speech appropriate to the context (for example, speaking formally with adults, freely with peers); culturally appropriate communicative behavior (distinguishing between forms of politeness in both languages); understanding the social significance of intonation and facial expressions; being able to maintain or increase the effectiveness of communication. The model of communicative competence put forward by M. Canale, M. Swain, and the theoretical views of G. Leech on pragmatic competence require a deep approach to this issue from a linguistic and sociolinguistic perspective. According to him, communication strategies represent a child's skills in establishing and managing purposeful communication, while pragmatic speech skills embody the substantive, cultural, and contextual appropriateness of communication.

Thus, in a bilingual educational environment, play is not only a means of language learning, but also a complex pedagogical mechanism that comprehensively develops the child.

Based on theoretical analyses, it was concluded that the pedagogical potential of play in a bilingual educational environment encompasses social, linguistic, emotional and cognitive aspects. Below we will dwell on the content of these aspects:

Socially, play serves to form a culture of cooperation, agreement, role distribution and communication in children. Bilingual games add an intercultural component to this process: the child learns the behavior of representatives of different languages and cultures and develops feelings of tolerance and empathy.

From a linguistic point of view, play is an effective tool for shaping a child's speech in a natural setting. According to F. Rogers, "through play, the child learns to use language actively, because in play, language performs a real communicative function." In a bilingual environment, this process occurs simultaneously in two languages, as a result of which the child acquires metalinguistic skills such as code-switching, choosing words appropriate to the context, and adapting syntactic structures.

Thus, while communication strategies require social and semantic adaptation in bilingualism, that is, the ability to

choose vocabulary, speech forms appropriate to the language of the interlocutor, social status, and communicative situation, pragmatic speech skills demonstrate the ability to use language units appropriately for context, culture, and purpose.

## **2. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the lack of integral cooperation between parents and teachers creates many limitations in the personal and socio-communicative development of a child. Therefore, in preschool educational organizations, the active involvement of parents in the pedagogical process, the systematic organization of mutual communication, and the formation of a unified approach to educational goals are considered important scientific, theoretical, and practical tasks.

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