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DEVELOPING STUDENTS' ORAL SPEECH SKILLS IN RUSSIAN LANGUAGE LESSONS AT GENERAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS

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Abstract
The development of students' oral speech skills is one of the most important objectives of teaching Russian in general education schools. Oral communication enables learners to express their thoughts, exchange information, participate in discussions, and interact effectively in different communicative situations. This article examines the theoretical and methodological foundations of developing students' oral speech skills in Russian language lessons. Particular attention is paid to communicative teaching methods, dialogue and monologue activities, role-playing, discussion, problem-solving tasks, and interactive techniques. The article emphasizes the importance of creating a supportive language environment, enriching students' vocabulary, improving grammatical accuracy, and developing their ability to use language appropriately in various communicative contexts. It also presents practical recommendations for organizing oral speech activities in the classroom.

Keywords: Oral speech, speaking skills, Russian language teaching, communicative competence, dialogue, monologue, interactive methods, general education school, language environment.

Introduction

In the modern educational system, the development of students' communicative competence has become one of the central objectives of language education. Learning a language is not limited to memorizing vocabulary and grammatical rules; it also involves the ability to use linguistic knowledge in real-life

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communication. Therefore, developing oral speech skills is an essential component of teaching Russian in general education schools.

Oral speech plays a significant role in students' intellectual, social, and personal development. Through speaking, learners express their opinions, communicate their needs, discuss different issues, and establish relationships with other people. The ability to speak clearly and coherently also contributes to the development of critical thinking, creativity, and self-confidence.

In the context of multilingual education, teaching Russian requires the use of effective methods that encourage students to communicate actively. Learners should be provided with opportunities to use Russian in meaningful situations rather than simply reproduce memorized sentences. Consequently, the teacher's role is to organize a communicative learning environment in which students can practise speaking, ask questions, express ideas, and respond to others.

The purpose of this article is to examine effective pedagogical approaches and classroom activities aimed at developing students' oral speech skills in Russian language lessons at general education schools.

1. Theoretical Foundations of Oral Speech Development

Oral speech is a complex communicative activity involving the interaction of linguistic, cognitive, psychological, and social processes. It requires learners to select appropriate vocabulary, construct grammatically correct sentences, organize ideas logically, and convey information in accordance with the communicative situation.

In language education, oral speech is generally divided into two main forms: dialogue and monologue.

Dialogue speech involves communication between two or more participants. It is characterized by alternation of speaking turns, questions and answers, reactions, clarification, and the exchange of information. Dialogue requires learners not only to produce their own statements but also to understand and respond appropriately to their interlocutors.

Monologue speech is a relatively extended form of speaking in which one person communicates information, describes events, explains ideas, or presents an

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opinion. It requires logical organization, coherence, appropriate vocabulary, and grammatical accuracy.

Both forms are essential in the process of teaching Russian. Dialogue develops interactive communication skills, while monologue helps students organize and express their thoughts independently.

The development of oral speech should be systematic and gradual. At the initial stages, students may practise pronunciation, basic vocabulary, and simple sentence structures. As their language proficiency increases, they should move towards more complex activities, including storytelling, descriptions, presentations, discussions, and debates.

2. The Role of Communicative Competence in Teaching Russian

Communicative competence refers to the ability to use language effectively and appropriately in different situations. It includes several interconnected components:

Linguistic competence: knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and sentence structure.

Sociolinguistic competence: the ability to select language forms according to the social context and communication participants.

Discourse competence: the ability to produce coherent and logically connected statements.

Strategic competence: the ability to overcome communication difficulties through clarification, repetition, paraphrasing, and other strategies.

In Russian language lessons, these components should be developed together. For example, when students participate in a dialogue about their school, they need vocabulary related to education, knowledge of grammatical structures, the ability to formulate questions, and appropriate expressions for responding to their classmates.

A communicative approach makes the learning process more practical and student-centred. Instead of concentrating exclusively on theoretical explanations, the teacher creates situations in which learners need to use Russian to achieve a particular communicative purpose.

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3. Effective Methods for Developing Oral Speech Skills

The successful development of oral speech depends on the appropriate selection and combination of teaching methods. The following methods can be particularly effective in general education schools.

3.1. Dialogue-Based Activities

Dialogue is one of the most accessible ways to develop students' speaking abilities. Teachers can organize pair work in which learners ask and answer questions on familiar topics.
Suggested topics include:

My family;

My school;

My daily routine;

My favourite book;

My hobbies;

Environmental protection;

Healthy lifestyle.

For example, students can work in pairs and conduct a short interview about their daily routines. One student asks questions, while the other provides answers. They then exchange roles.
Such activities help learners develop fluency, listening comprehension, question formation, and the ability to respond spontaneously.

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3.2. Role-Playing

Role-playing creates simulated real-life communication situations. Students assume different social roles and communicate in accordance with a given scenario.

Examples include:

A conversation between a customer and a shop assistant;

A dialogue between a doctor and a patient;

An interview between a journalist and a famous person;

A conversation between a teacher and a student;

Asking for directions in a city.

Role-playing encourages students to use language creatively and helps reduce psychological barriers associated with speaking a foreign or second language.

3.3. Storytelling and Picture Description

Storytelling is an effective method for developing monologue speech. Students may be asked to describe a picture, retell a short text, or create their own story based on a sequence of illustrations.

The teacher can provide guiding questions:

What can you see in the picture?

Where are the people?

What are they doing?

What might happen next?

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What is your opinion about the situation?
These questions help learners organize their ideas and construct coherent statements. Gradually, the teacher can reduce the amount of support provided and encourage students to speak independently.

3.4. Discussions and Debates

Discussions allow students to express personal opinions, provide arguments, and respond to alternative viewpoints. They are especially useful for developing advanced oral communication skills.
Possible discussion topics include:

Is reading more useful than watching television?

Should students use smartphones at school?

Why is environmental protection important?

What makes a good friend?

Is online learning as effective as classroom learning?

During discussions, students learn to use expressions such as “I believe that…”, “In my opinion…”, “I agree with this statement because…”, and “I see your point, but…”.
These expressions help learners structure their arguments and participate in meaningful communication.

3.5. Problem-Solving Activities

Problem-solving tasks require students to discuss a situation and find an appropriate solution. For example, the teacher may present the following task:
“Your class is planning an educational trip. You have a limited budget and several places to choose from. Discuss the options and decide where the class should go.”

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Students must exchange suggestions, compare alternatives, justify their choices, and reach a common decision. This method develops speaking fluency, logical reasoning, cooperation, and negotiation skills.

4. Stages of Developing Oral Speech Skills

Oral speech development should be organized through a sequence of interconnected stages.

The first stage is preparatory work. At this stage, the teacher introduces new vocabulary, explains relevant grammatical structures, and provides pronunciation practice. Students become familiar with the language material required for communication.

The second stage is controlled speaking practice. Learners use newly acquired vocabulary and grammatical structures in model dialogues, sentence completion activities, question-and-answer exercises, and guided descriptions.

The third stage is semi-controlled communication. Students perform role-plays, describe pictures, retell texts, and participate in discussions with the support of guiding questions or key vocabulary.

The fourth stage is independent communication. Learners express their ideas without extensive teacher support. They participate in debates, give presentations, discuss problems, and communicate in simulated real-life situations.

The fifth stage is reflection and assessment. Students evaluate their own performance and receive feedback from the teacher and classmates. Attention is given to fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary use, and coherence.

This gradual progression helps learners move from reproducing language patterns to communicating independently.

5. The Use of Interactive Technologies and Digital Resources

Modern educational technologies provide additional opportunities for developing oral speech skills. Audio and video materials expose students to authentic pronunciation, intonation, vocabulary, and different speech styles.

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Teachers can use:
Audio recordings for listening and retelling activities;

Short videos for discussion and description;

Digital presentations for individual speaking tasks;

Online communication platforms for collaborative projects;

Voice recordings for pronunciation practice and self-assessment.

For instance, students may record a two-minute presentation on a selected topic and listen to their own speech. They can identify pronunciation difficulties, pauses, grammatical mistakes, and areas requiring improvement.
However, digital tools should support, rather than replace, direct communication between students and teachers. Classroom interaction remains essential for developing spontaneous speaking abilities.

6. Common Difficulties in Developing Students' Oral Speech
Despite the importance of oral communication, students may experience several difficulties during Russian language lessons.
One common problem is a limited vocabulary. Learners may understand a text but struggle to express their thoughts because they do not know the necessary words and expressions.
Another difficulty is grammatical insecurity. Students may hesitate because they are afraid of making mistakes when using Russian grammatical forms.
Psychological barriers also influence speaking performance. Some learners feel embarrassed, lack confidence, or fear negative evaluation from classmates.
In addition, insufficient speaking practice may prevent students from developing fluency. If lessons focus mainly on reading, writing, and grammar exercises, learners may have limited opportunities to communicate orally.
To overcome these difficulties, teachers should create a supportive classroom atmosphere, encourage active participation, introduce regular speaking activities,

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and treat mistakes as a natural part of the learning process. Corrective feedback should be constructive and appropriate to the learner's level.

7. Assessment of Oral Speech Skills

Assessment is an important component of oral speech development. It helps teachers identify students' strengths and weaknesses and plan further instruction. The following criteria can be used to assess oral performance:

Assessment criterion

Description

Fluency

Ability to speak at an appropriate pace with limited hesitation

Accuracy

Correct use of grammar and vocabulary

Pronunciation

Clear articulation and appropriate intonation

Vocabulary range

Ability to use varied and relevant words

Coherence

Logical organization and connection of ideas

Interaction

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Ability to initiate, maintain, and respond in communication

Assessment should not be limited to identifying mistakes. It should also recognize students' progress, encourage self-confidence, and motivate them to participate more actively in classroom communication.

Self-assessment and peer assessment can complement teacher evaluation. Students may use simple checklists to reflect on their speaking performance and identify specific goals for improvement.

Conclusion

The development of students' oral speech skills is a fundamental objective of teaching Russian in general education schools. Effective speaking instruction requires a systematic combination of linguistic preparation, controlled practice, interactive communication, and independent speech production.

Dialogue, role-playing, storytelling, picture description, discussions, debates, and problem-solving activities provide learners with meaningful opportunities to use Russian in different communicative situations. The communicative approach, supported by interactive technologies and constructive assessment, contributes to the development of fluency, accuracy, confidence, and communicative independence.

The teacher plays a key role in creating a supportive language environment in which every student has opportunities to speak, express opinions, ask questions, and participate in collaborative activities. Therefore, oral speech development should be treated not as an occasional classroom activity but as a continuous and purposeful process integrated into the entire system of Russian language teaching.

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