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PECULIARITIES OF SPEECH DEVELOPMENT OF SENIOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN WITH DISORDERS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

Abstract. The article presents some results of an experimental study of coherent speech of preschool children with intellectual disability as a major condition of preparation for learning reading and writing. Peculiar features of the speech of children with intellectual disability are described on the background of speech development of senior preschool children with typical development and with intellectual disability.

Keywords: intellectual disability; disorders of psychological development; speech; preparation for learning reading and writing; preschool children.

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The interest to the problem of preparation to learning reading and writing of senior preschool children with disorders of psychological development (DPD) may be attributed to the growing role of reading and writing as activity which ensures successful preparation of the child for school. Adequate level of speech development of senior preschool children is one of the prerequisites to learning reading and writing. It is universally recognized now that there is close relationship between oral speech underdevelopment and reading and writing

disorders (N. Yu. Boryakova, L. S. Vygotskiy, R. I. Lalaeva, E. S. Slepovich, E. F. Sobotovich, U. V. Ul'enkova, etc. [1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6]). We carried out a comparative study of speech of senior preschool children in the framework of experimental investigation of preparation of preschool children with disorders of psychological development for learning reading and writing at school. 102 children between the ages of 6 and 7 with different levels of intellectual development took part in the experiment: 30 typically developing children, 52 children

with disorders of psychological development and 20 children with mild intellectual disability (ID). Observation was carried out during the first two months of the children's stay at a preschool education institution.

We carried out observation using a specially designed method which included tasks on making up a story based on a plot-driven picture ("Winter Games") and on understanding and

usage of simple prepositions (*on, under, over, in, near*). Each task was evaluated using a five point scale from 0 to 4.

A comparative analysis of the data of typically developing children and their peers with disorders of psychological development and with intellectual disability revealed the following quantitative results of speech development (see Table 1).

Table 1

Speech development indicators of preschool children, %

Parameters	Number of points	Typically developing children (n = 30)	Children with disorders of psychological development (n = 52)	Children with intellectual disability (n = 20)
Making up a story based on a plot-driven picture	0	10.0	26.9	43.3
	1	20.0	40.4	56.7
	2	40.0	25.0	–
	3	20.0	7.7	–
	4	10.0	–	–
Understanding and usage of simple prepositions	0	–	7.7	53.3
	1	–	28.8	46.7
	2	5.0	52.0	–
	3	60.0	11.5	–
	4	35.0	–	–
Average score of points	–	3.2	1.5	0.4

The data presented in Table 1 demonstrate the presence of significant differences in speech development of senior preschool children with different levels of intellectual development: typically developing children, children with disorders of psychological development and children with mild intellectual disability. According to the average score of points the results of children with disorders of psychological development are 1.7 points lower than those of typically developing children, and 1.1 points higher than those of children with mild intellectual disability.

The data obtained in the course of our observation allow us to discriminate both underdevelopment of active speech and its comprehension by children with intellectual disability in comparison with normally developing peers. And the results characterizing self-production of text (making up a story based on a plot-driven picture) by children with DPD were very close to those of their peers with ID (the indicators of 0 and 1 points prevail – 67.3% and 100% correspondingly). In comprehension and production of situational utterances in the process of communication (comprehension and

usage of simple prepositions) the results of children with DPD were very close to those of their typically developing peers (the indicators of 2 and 3 points prevail – 63.5% and 65.0% correspondingly).

Analysis of the experimental data allows determining qualitative peculiarities of speech development of senior preschool children. Thus, typically developing children showed good comprehension of addressed speech and carried out all instructions and requests of the grown-up person. Children with DPD understood and carried out simple instructions and requests. Complex instructions including several steps caused difficulties and could be carried out only after repetition of the instruction. Preschool children with ID did not always understand and carry out even simple instructions, to say nothing of complex two-step ones. Reiteration made the completion of the task more successful in most children.

Active speech of children with ID is less developed than that of children with typical development. In addition to polymorphic dysarthria they demonstrated poor lexico-grammatical skills and phonemic awareness, and had problems with word formation. They possess the phrasal speech skills, but if the speech of children with DPD satisfied the needs of everyday communication, in children with ID it was dramatically underdeveloped.

Children with ID cannot make up a story based on a plot-driven picture, give descriptions of objects or make up a creative story. We found

out that even normally developing children had problems in producing a story based on a plot-driven picture. Only a small proportion of these children (10%) could make up a detailed coherent story based on a picture and described the relationships between the characters (4 points). The preschool children used both simple unextended / extended sentences and complex logico-grammatical constructions without grammar mistakes (“*Nastupila zima. Vypal sneg. Deti poshli gulyat'. Masha s Vasey delayut snegovika. Sobaka Tuzik sidit i merznet. Yura edet na sankakh, emu nnavitsya. On khochet s rebyatami igrat' v snezhki. Deti ezdyat na lyzhakh, im nnavitsya. Khorosho zimoy!*”) Another 20% of children tried to enumerate everything they saw in the picture without adding anything from their own experience. While narrating, they used both simple extended sentences and complex lexico-grammatical constructions. At the same time, some of these children made grammar mistakes while constructing sentences and used simple unextended sentences.

The main part of typically developing children (40%) made up a short story by answering questions of a grown-up or told about what they saw in the picture with only two or several disconnected simple unextended sentences making grammar mistakes into the bargain (“*Zima prishla. Eto Sasha kataetsya na sankakh. Zhuchka sidit. Vasya i Kolya poshli snegovik lepit'. U nikh on razvalivaetsya!*”). The stories of the majority of typically developing children (40%) were brief

and not independent enough. As a rule, children described the picture with two or more disconnected unextended or extended sentences or made up a story with the help of the experimenter's questions. In both cases children made grammar mistakes: *Zima prishla. Eto Sasha kataetsya na sankakh. Zhuchka sidit. Vasya i Kolya poshli snegovik lepit'. U nikh on razvalivaetsya.*

Preschool children with DPD made up a story based on a plot-driven picture with even more difficulties. They enumerated the main objects they saw in the picture and their actions. And they did it unsystematically. More often than not they used nominative and simple unextended and extended sentences. Complex lexico-grammatical constructions were hardly ever used. Coherent speech of children with DPD was agrammatical; they often used simple constructions and clichés (*Sobachka. Mal'chik. Mal'chik. Eshche mal'chik. Sanka i snegovik. Katayutsya, a sobachka stoit*). Both passive and active vocabularies are poor and do not correspond to the given age.

While making up a story based on a plot-driven picture, preschool children with DPD often drifted to another topic which was more familiar to them. They inserted secondary associations and stereotypes connected with what they saw in the picture or knew from their personal experience. Thus, not infrequently the message was interrupted by irrelevant thoughts and judgments (*A u menya tozhe sanki est'; My s rebyatami lepili snegovika na ploshchadke davno*).

In contrast to typically develop-

ing children, children with DPD had problems in identifying causal-consecutive relations even when visual supports (pictures, illustrations) were used. On the whole, they understood the semantic content of the situation shown in the plot-driven picture. This fact is suggested by correct, though short answers to the content of the picture. But the questions did not facilitate the emergence of a semantically coherent string of utterances.

As different from preschool children with DPD, their peers with ID could not make up a coherent story based on a plot-driven picture. A little more than half of the preschool children (56.7 %) enumerated separate objects and some actions by pointing at them with their finger (*Devochka. Vot, smotri. Snegovika. Edet. Deti*), and could not name the main objects shown in the picture by themselves. The rest of the children (43.3 %) could not enumerate the main objects shown in the picture by themselves. In general, we can speak of the presence of coherent speech in preschool children of this category, but it was agrammatical, poor in content and expression, polymorphic dysarthria and indistinctness. As a rule, they used nominative and simple unextended and extended sentences; complex logico-grammatical constructions were used very seldom.

Many children with ID did not understand the content of the picture which was seen from their inability to answer questions to its content.

Observation of impressive and expressive speech of the children in the process of conduct of various dai-

ly routine activities and talks demonstrated deficiency of not only spontaneous but also of reflected speech of preschool children with DPD; dialogue was easier for them than monologue.

The same as the children with ID, children with DPD are characterized by poor and inexact vocabulary. The children could not differentiate words by their meaning; they used the same words in their expressive speech without realizing the change of lexical meanings (*Devochek. Oni delayut..., oni... Devochki... na sankakh kataetsya, i sneg. Mal'chik na lyzhakh kataetsya tam. Devochka tam na lyzhakh kataetsya. Tam dom. Zdes' snezhinki padayut. Zdes' sneg i elki. Snegovik. Devochki delayut...*). Their vocabulary missed many names of actions and properties, and sometimes names of objects.

Children with ID in most cases used a simple phrase built mainly of nouns, pronouns and verbs. The vocabulary of children with DPD was also characterized by inadequate acquisition of synonymic means, which is shown by the fact that while describing a plot-driven picture they often used the same words.

The next peculiarity of speech of preschool children with DPD consists in the fact that it has a predominantly situational character. It is reflected in abundant usage of personal and demonstrative pronouns in the independent speech of preschool children, as well as non-verbal means of communication – mimicry and gestures.

While extending the phrase, preschool children with ID more often than other children demonstrated per-

sistent grammar mistakes, especially on agreement of nouns in indirect cases with adjectives and pronouns. The children of this category did not always understand and use correctly simple prepositions. They replaced them, sometimes dropped and, as a result, made mistakes in prepositional government and in agreement of nouns with verbs and adjectives (“*Delayut snegovik*”).

In contrast to typically developing preschool children, children with DPD needed constant help while they completed the tasks; they readily accepted this help. This fact distinguished them from their peers with ID who were often not ready to accept the help of a grown-up.

The presented results show that senior preschool children with DPD need well prepared and organized rehabilitation work aimed at development of all aspects of speech in accordance with special importance of this prerequisite to teaching reading and writing skills.

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