



## ISSUES OF STARTING TO TEACH ENGLISH FROM AN EARLY AGE

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### ABSTRACT

*The problem of children's psychological readiness for learning has always been relevant, since the success of the future development and education of children depends on the methods of solving it, which is the key not only to their competitive ability in the labor market, but also to their success in later life in general. At the moment, there is a trend toward an earlier start to education, as many parents strive to begin this process at the age of 3–4 years.*

### INTRODUCTION

It has been established that a child's success in learning directly depends on the level of his physiological, mental, emotional and volitional development. He needs to learn to think correctly, generalize and distinguish between the phenomena of the surrounding world, as well as control and plan his actions and decisions. Thanks to this, a unique foundation is created for building future successful educational activities and painless adaptation to school learning.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

From the above, we can conclude that the indicated components of readiness for early learning represent a necessary and sufficient level of mental development of a child to begin training in a program of any complexity, but adequate to the child's age. However, it should be noted that early teaching of a subject such as "Foreign Language" has its own characteristics. In his works, the famous methodologist S. Krashen argued that there are two approaches to learning a foreign language (hereinafter - FL):

- 1) acquisition – a subconscious and intuitive process of building a language system, similar to the process of acquiring speech by children;
- 2) the process of its conscious study, when students follow the form, comprehend the rules and realize everything that happens to them [1].

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Having analyzed only some of the works of domestic and foreign researchers, we can identify the following main components of children's psychological readiness for learning:



- personal readiness of children;
- intellectual readiness;
- emotional-volitional readiness;
- physiological readiness.

One of the main components of readiness for learning is personal readiness, which presupposes the child's readiness to accept a new social role with the presence of rights and responsibilities and is manifested in the presence of educational motivation, the ability to communicate with adults, and the ability to subordinate his behavior to the rules of conducting classes. Successful educational activity also depends on a certain level of development of the child's emotional sphere, on his emotional stability [2].

The methodological basis of the study included:

- socio-psychological methods: observation, survey, questioning;
- study and generalization of the work experience of teachers and psychologists;
- a scientific and theoretical method consisting of an analytical review of psychological and pedagogical literature devoted to the issues of early childhood education in general and foreign language teaching in particular.

A scientific approach to describing the main components of children's psychological readiness for learning has led to the realization of the need to consider the issue of their use in the early education of children in a foreign language. The theoretical basis for the study was the work of L. I. Bozhovich, D. B. Elkonin and other representatives of L. S. Vygotsky's school, who showed that there is no one-to-one correspondence between learning and development and the question of the primacy of these processes is open.

Research by such foreign scientists as Maria Luz Zelaya, Krasen and others has led to the conclusion that the age criterion in determining children's readiness for early learning of a foreign language is ambiguous.

The study and generalization of the work experience of teachers and psychologists in schools and kindergartens in the city of Volgograd made it possible to raise the question of the feasibility of early learning of a foreign language for children from 4–5 years of age.

In research on the study of foreign languages, the theory of the critical period occupies a special place. Without going into neurological subtleties, we note that this hypothesis assumes the following: children aged 4 to 10 years are easier to learn a foreign language than those who begin to learn it after puberty. This is explained by the rapid growth of neural connections in children 4–10 years old compared to children aged 11 years and older, in which it is impossible to acquire linguistic knowledge instinctively, as happens at an earlier stage. According to adherents of this theory, the human brain loses plasticity after puberty, and this explains the difficulties in learning a foreign language in secondary school [1].

Another famous scientist Krashen confirmed this hypothesis by studying the relationship between three parameters of foreign language learning: route, final result and speed. "Route" describes the process of learning a foreign language (order and sequence), and "speed" is the time period during which the student will achieve the final result. According to his research, students 11 years of age and older learn a foreign language faster and, accordingly, "go" faster. However, children who started studying a foreign language at the age



of 4–5 years, although they study it longer, their results are better and more successful [3]. This is also explained by the skills acquired at the initial stage of automatic assimilation of language material and its repeated repetition in the process of mastering a foreign language.

However, there are a number of studies that refute the above theory. During a project carried out by the Spanish Ministry of Education, groups of children who began learning English at the age of 4, 8 and 11 were analyzed. The analysis showed that children who started learning FL at an earlier stage took more time to master the same educational material than children who started learning FL at a later stage (9 years versus 7). Various aspects of language learning were analyzed: listening comprehension and the ability to reproduce what was heard, speech fluency, knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, written and oral speech (monologue and dialogic), the presence of interaction skills, the use of various strategies in speech and the formation of motivation. Studies have shown that the level of language acquisition by children who began learning it at age 11 was significantly higher than that of children with an earlier start (8 years). As for children who began studying FL in kindergarten (from the age of 4), studies have confirmed that such an early start does not at all guarantee the best quality of the material studied [4].

There are many signs of a motivating teacher, including:

- loves his job;
- always ready to help children with their individual development;
- has a sense of humor;
- open to children’s suggestions;
- knows English well, etc. [2]

Children in elementary school, as a rule, like FL lessons; they willingly talk about how lessons in this subject go and about the teacher. The classes are interesting and fun, they sing and do exercises. Children of the middle level, as a rule, note the monotony of classes, they reach a stage of satiety with the language, all the material that they have not been able to learn turns into a snowball, they rarely understand the teacher in class, and copy homework. In high school, students often develop a negative attitude towards the language; they sharply criticize the teacher, often not realizing that the problem lies not only and not so much in the teacher, but in their reluctance to learn.

## CONCLUSION

Thus, our study showed:

1. The main components of children’s psychological readiness for learning include: children’s personal readiness; intellectual readiness; emotional-volitional readiness; physiological readiness.
2. A child may be ready to learn in the classroom, to communicate with peers, but not cope with the difficulties that arise in the process of studying a number of subjects, including a foreign language.
3. There is no optimal age to start learning a foreign language; the main indicator is the maturity of one’s personal, intellectual, emotional-volitional and physiological readiness.



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