PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES OF SPEECH DEVELOPMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract: *Speech development in primary school students (ages 6–10/11 years) is a critical period characterized by the transition from concrete, situational thinking to more abstract and logical forms of verbal reasoning. This article examines the key psychological features of speech at this age, including rapid vocabulary expansion, improvement in grammatical structure, development of coherent monologue and dialogue, and the internalization of private speech into inner speech as described by Vygotsky. Primary school children exhibit increased motivation for verbal communication, enhanced phonological awareness, and growing metacognitive control over speech. The study highlights the role of social interaction, schooling, and cultural tools in shaping expressive and receptive language skills. In the Uzbek context, national educational reforms emphasize integrated speech development through mother tongue instruction. Findings indicate that systematic pedagogical interventions can reduce speech delays and enhance cognitive-linguistic integration, with implications for inclusive education [1; 10; 20].*

Keywords: *Speech development, primary school age, psychological features, Vygotsky's theory, private speech, inner speech, vocabulary expansion, coherent speech, phonological awareness, social interaction, Uzbekistan education.*

INTRODUCTION

Primary school age marks a pivotal stage in child development where speech evolves from predominantly egocentric and situational forms to more structured, logical, and self-regulatory functions. According to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, speech serves as the primary tool for cognitive development, transitioning from external social speech to private (egocentric) speech and finally to internalized inner speech [20; 22]. During this period (6–11 years), children experience significant growth in vocabulary (from ~2,500–3,000 words at age 6 to 10,000+ by age 10), grammatical complexity, and the ability to produce coherent narratives [4; 5].

In Uzbekistan, where primary education focuses on mother tongue mastery and inclusive approaches, understanding these psychological features is essential for addressing individual differences and supporting students with speech challenges [30; 39]. This thesis analyzes the interplay between psychological processes (thinking, memory, attention) and speech, drawing on global and local research.

Relevance of Work The relevance of studying speech development in primary school stems from its direct impact on academic success, social adaptation, and cognitive growth. Delays or disorders in speech can lead to secondary issues such as learning difficulties, low self-esteem, and social isolation [3; 8]. In the post-pandemic era, increased screen time and reduced peer interaction have heightened concerns about speech delays [10].

In Uzbekistan, educational reforms under "Digital Uzbekistan 2030" and inclusive education policies emphasize early detection and correction of speech issues in primary grades [30; 33]. Global statistics show that 7–10% of primary students experience speech-language disorders, underscoring the need for psychological-pedagogical support [4; 9]. This work bridges theoretical insights (Vygotsky, Piaget) with practical applications in Uzbek schools.

Purpose The purpose is to analyze the main psychological features of speech development in primary school students, identify key stages and influencing factors, and provide evidence-based recommendations for educators and psychologists in Uzbekistan and beyond.

Materials and Methods of Research The research is based on a systematic review of 30+ sources, including Vygotsky's foundational works, contemporary international studies (NIDCD, PMC), and Uzbek pedagogical literature. Methods include theoretical analysis, comparative review of developmental milestones, and synthesis of empirical data from longitudinal studies. Uzbek sources focus on local primary education contexts [30; 35; 39]. Data were qualitatively analyzed for patterns in vocabulary, grammar, coherence, and self-regulation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Key Psychological Features of Speech Development

1. Rapid Vocabulary Expansion and Semantic Development Primary school students demonstrate explosive growth in active vocabulary, reaching 5,000–10,000 words by age 10. Words acquire abstract meanings, synonyms, antonyms, and polysemy [5; 39]. Psychologically, this links to concrete-to-abstract thinking transition and improved categorization skills [1].

2. Grammatical and Syntactic Mastery Children master complex sentences, tenses, and subordinate clauses. By age 8–9, speech becomes grammatically correct in most cases [4]. This reflects growing logical thinking and metalinguistic awareness.

3. Development of Coherent Speech (Monologue and Dialogue) Students produce detailed retellings, stories, and arguments. Dialogue skills improve through turn-taking and topic maintenance [2; 13]. Psychologically, this supports social cognition and empathy.

4. Private and Inner Speech (Vygotsky's Framework) Private speech peaks at 4–7 years and decreases in primary school as it internalizes into silent inner speech for

self-regulation, planning, and problem-solving [20; 21; 23]. This transition marks the fusion of thought and language, enabling higher mental functions.

5. Phonological and Articulatory Refinement By age 7–8, most speech sounds are mastered, though some (e.g., /r/, /l/) may persist in distortions [10; 14]. Attention and auditory discrimination improve.

Influencing Factors

• Social Interaction and Schooling — Vygotsky emphasized the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) where guided interaction accelerates speech [20].

• Cultural Tools — In Uzbekistan, mother tongue instruction and national games foster rich verbal environments [27; 35].

• Individual Differences — Gender, family environment, and possible disorders affect pace [3; 8].

Discussion Primary school speech development integrates cognitive, social, and linguistic domains. Vygotsky's stages (social → private → inner) explain self-regulation gains [22]. Challenges include speech underdevelopment in some children, requiring early intervention [31]. Uzbek studies highlight the need for integrated methods combining play, dialogue, and technology [30; 39].

Conclusion Speech development in primary school students features rapid lexical-semantic growth, grammatical refinement, coherent expression, and internalization of speech for thought. These processes support overall psychological maturation. Educators should prioritize interactive methods, individual approaches, and timely correction. In Uzbekistan, integrating national traditions with modern psychology will enhance outcomes.

Recommendations

• Incorporate dialogue-based activities and private speech encouragement in lessons.

• Train teachers in speech diagnostics and ZPD-based scaffolding.

• Develop inclusive programs for students with delays.

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