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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Developing Coherent Speech on The Basis of Integrative-Cognitive Tasks: A Theoretical and Methodological Analysis

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Abstract

This article examines the theoretical and methodological essence of developing coherent speech in primary school pupils through integrative-cognitive tasks. It analyses such features of coherent speech as semantic integrity, logical consistency, semantic cohesion and lexical-grammatical accuracy. The article substantiates the potential of integrative-cognitive tasks for forming pupils' skills in perceiving information, identifying semantic relations, planning their thoughts, producing oral and written discourse, and reflectively analysing their own speech. As a result, the methodological significance of organising the development of coherent speech in primary education as a unity of cognitive activity and speech practice is clarified.

KEYWORDS

Primary education, coherent speech, speech competence, integrative-cognitive tasks, cognitive activity, discursive competence, text production, logical consistency, semantic cohesion, reflective analysis.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary primary education, developing pupils' speech competence and forming their ability to express their own thoughts independently, with logical consistency and semantic integrity, is regarded as one of the key pedagogical tasks. This is because a pupil's speech development is not determined solely by vocabulary size or by the mastery of grammatical rules. It also encompasses the ability to comprehend information, to single out essential data, to identify relations between events and phenomena, to organise ideas in a particular sequence, and to express them in accordance with the communicative purpose. In this respect, developing coherent speech requires the integration of primary school pupils' linguistic knowledge with their thinking activity.

Coherent speech is characterised not merely by a pupil's use of individual words and sentences, but by the ability to combine them semantically and logically so as to express a complete idea. Here, the semantic completeness of the text, the sequence of ideas, the semantic links between sentences, the appropriate use of lexical and grammatical devices, and the correspondence of the utterance to the communicative purpose all acquire particular importance. Consequently, the development of coherent speech requires of the pupil not only a knowledge of language units, but also an understanding of content, the processing of information and its organisation into an independent speech product.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In her article, E.T.Levy sets out the essential role of language in establishing coherence in discourse, that is, semantic integrity and consistency: in the process of integrating

information we rely on propositional thinking and activate cohesive mechanisms in order to generalise our representations of the relevant events. Cohesive devices are thus the means employed in creating narratives that reveal the complex motives behind actions. The interconnection of meanings arises only as a result of arranging words in a particular sequence. This process is made possible by the capacity to reorganise whole utterances and to replace one linguistic form with another.

At a certain level of linguistic description, it becomes evident that language consists of a system of sentence types possessing distinctive patterns, such as active and passive constructions. Within this system, one type of sentence may be transformed into another according to particular regularities. An approach grounded in the continuity of discourse and its development over time reveals the psychological significance of such linguistic transformations more precisely. These transformations make it possible for language to be used as a means of interpreting observed and narrated events.

A.V.Shuvaeva devotes her research to the development of younger schoolchildren's speech through work with texts. The main focus of the study is the formation of pupils' skills in comprehending a text, analysing its semantic and structural features, and producing an independent speech product. The methodological significance of this line of research lies in the fact that the text ceases to be merely an object of reading or retelling for the pupil and becomes a means of organising speech activity. In the course of analysing a text, the pupil learns to identify the main idea, to distinguish essential information from secondary information, to establish connections between events, and to re-express the content in a particular sequence. Exercises such as restructuring a text, completing some of its parts, selecting a title appropriate to its content, or continuing it independently support the pupil's transition from reproductive activity to creative speech activity.

A.A.Zakharova's research examines the problem of teaching first-grade pupils to produce coherent oral utterances. The methodological essence of this line of work consists in ensuring the pupil's gradual transition from the skill of constructing isolated sentences to the skill of producing a semantically integral utterance. At first the pupil performs such exercises as describing an object, a person or a phenomenon, composing sentences on the basis of pictures, and answering given questions consistently. At subsequent stages, the pupil is engaged in more complex tasks: reconstructing the sequence of events, planning the content independently, explaining cause and effect, and composing a complete narrative about events and phenomena.

In her research, Sh.P.Kotibova links the improvement of the effectiveness of mother-tongue teaching in primary education with the development of pupils' speech activity. A thorough command of the mother tongue requires not only a knowledge of the rules of the language, but also the formation of the ability to express one's own thoughts independently, consistently and with semantic integrity. In the dissertation, the development of coherent speech is examined in close connection with the following issues:

- developing pupils' oral and written speech in mutual harmony;
- organising speech activity in connection with the processes of thinking;
- forming pupils' skills in perceiving, comprehending and re-expressing a text;
- teaching pupils to set out their own ideas with logical consistency;
- identifying speech errors and eliminating them.

DISCUSSION

In the process of developing coherent speech, the pupil is required to carry out several activities simultaneously: to comprehend the content, to single out essential information, to identify relations between events and phenomena, to plan the utterance and to express it through linguistic means.

Integrative-cognitive tasks make it possible to link these activities to one another. They give the pupil the opportunity to combine information obtained from various sources, to identify semantic relations and to produce the result in the form of an independent speech utterance.

The development of coherent speech on the basis of integrative-cognitive tasks may be organised through the following interrelated stages:

Table 1

Stages in developing coherent speech through integrative-cognitive tasks

	Name of the stage	Content
1.	Perceiving and comprehending information	The pupil becomes acquainted with a text, a picture, a table, the result of an observation or other sources of information. At this stage, attention is focused on understanding the content of the task, identifying the key concepts and singling out the essential data.
2.	Identifying semantic relations	The pupil identifies relations of cause and effect, time, similarity, difference and generalisation between units of information. This process forms the semantic basis of the forthcoming utterance.
3.	Planning the utterance	The pupil determines the purpose of the utterance, singles out the main idea and arranges the information in a particular order. Techniques such as drawing up a plan, selecting key words and establishing the sequence of events may be used here.
4.	Producing the utterance	The pupil expresses the planned content in oral or written form. In this process, the choice of words, the semantic linking of sentences, the use of grammatical devices and the maintenance of the integrity of the text are of particular importance.
5.	Reflective analysis and improvement	The pupil reviews his or her own utterance and identifies repeated words, breaks in meaning or insufficiently substantiated aspects of the idea. Where necessary, the pupil reconstructs the utterance.

These stages do not imply a rigid, unidirectional sequence. In the process of producing speech, the pupil may return to earlier stages, modify the plan, or reshape the idea on the basis of new information.

In producing coherent speech, taking the following aspects into account reflects the complex nature of the process:

- semantic completeness, that is, the pupil's reflection of the essential information relating to the topic in the utterance;
- logical consistency, that is, the expression of ideas and events in the correct sequence;
- semantic cohesion, that is, the maintenance of links between sentences and semantic parts;
- lexical-grammatical accuracy, that is, the selection of words appropriate to their meaning and compliance with grammatical norms;
- the production of an independent speech product, that is, the composition of the pupil's own utterance on the basis of the given information, without copying a ready-made model;
- reflective improvement, that is, the identification of shortcomings in one's own speech and the effort to correct them. In this respect, the tasks must be adapted to the age characteristics of the pupils.

Considering the exercise entitled "Honourable professions" in a primary school Mother Tongue textbook, it can be observed that learners are presented with a series of tasks designed to be completed within the framework of the given text. These tasks serve not only to develop learners' ability to construct coherent discourse based on textual evidence but also to consolidate and integrate their knowledge acquired in other

subject areas, particularly foreign language learning and mathematics. Thus, the pedagogical value of the exercise extends beyond the mere provision of answers to individual questions. Rather, it requires learners to formulate, articulate, and substantiate their own logically coherent and interconnected ideas on the basis of the textual content, thereby contributing to the development of their coherent speech and interdisciplinary thinking skills.

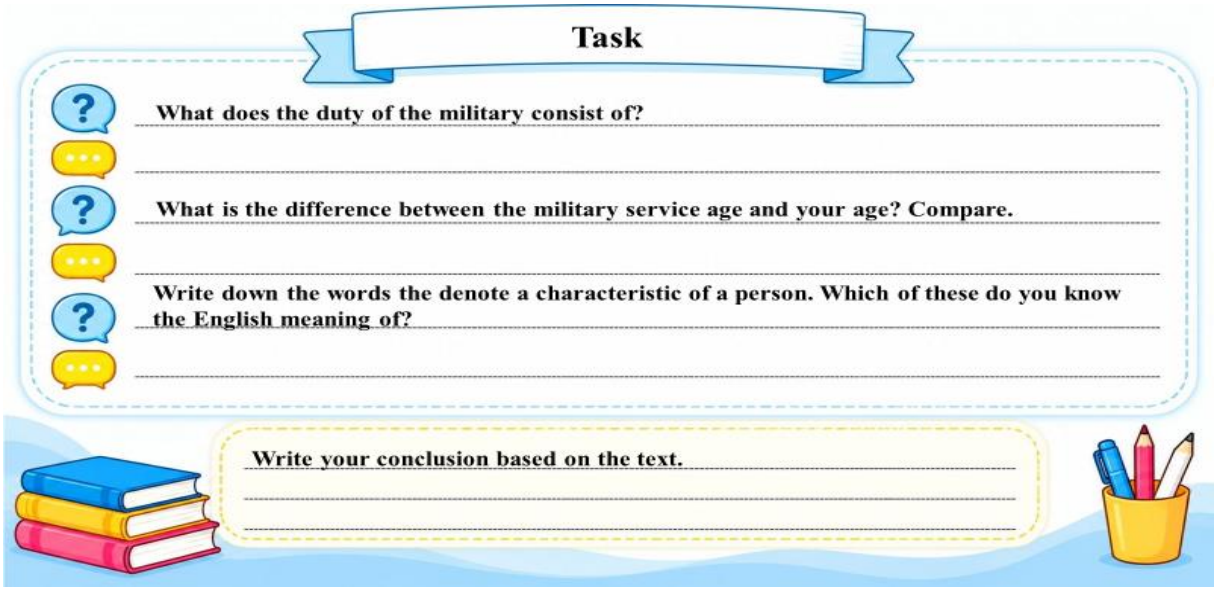


Figure 1. An integrative-cognitive task designed to foster the development of coherent speech in Grade 2 Mother tongue lessons.

In developing the speech of primary school pupils, particular attention must be paid to the development of both dialogic and monologic speech. Pupils master dialogic speech comparatively easily, which is explained by the following: at home and at school they constantly hear dialogic speech. Moreover, pupils communicate with one another and use predominantly dialogic speech.

The process of developing coherent speech is inseparably linked with the formation and refinement of pupils' discursive competence. For if coherent speech presupposes the expression of ideas with semantic and logical consistency, the maintenance of semantic cohesion between sentences and the production of an integral text, discursive competence denotes the ability to link speech units to one another in accordance with a particular communicative situation, purpose and content, to ensure the consistency of thought, and to shape an integral communicative meaning. From this point of view, tasks aimed at developing primary school pupils' coherent speech develop not only their skills in producing oral and written utterances, but also their ability to maintain the semantic integrity of a text, to employ logical connectives, to plan the sequence of ideas and to organise their speech in accordance with the communicative purpose. By means of integrative-cognitive tasks in particular, pupils are directed towards analysing various sources of information, generalising interrelated ideas, identifying cause-and-effect relations and setting out their own conclusions consistently. As a result, the development of coherent speech emerges as an important didactic instrument serving to refine the constituent aspects of discursive competence.

Discursive competence is one of the essential constituent aspects of speech competence and is not confined to a knowledge of individual words and sentences. It is manifested in the pupil's ability to link these units semantically and grammatically and thereby to produce an integral text.

In developing coherent speech, confining oneself to exercises aimed solely at composing texts may fail to reveal adequately the pupil's activity of thinking and organising content. The integrative-cognitive approach, by contrast, makes it possible to organise methodologically the processes that precede the production of the speech product as well.

An important point here is that a pupil's speech development should not be assessed solely by the length of the utterance or the number of sentences. The logical connectedness of ideas, the semantically correct integration of information and the purposeful use of linguistic means must also be taken into

account.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the development of primary school pupils' coherent speech is a complex, multi-component pedagogical process in which the mastery of language units, the comprehension of content, the logical organisation of thought and expression appropriate to the communicative situation are brought into harmony with one another. For this reason, it is not sufficient to assess the level of development of coherent speech solely by the grammatical correctness of sentences or by the length of the utterance. Semantic completeness, logical consistency, semantic cohesion, lexical-grammatical accuracy, the ability to produce an independent text and the ability to improve one's own speech must also be taken into account.

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