

РІВНЕНСЬКИЙ ДЕРЖАВНИЙ ГУМАНІТАРНИЙ УНІВЕРСИТЕТ  
ФАКУЛЬТЕТ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ ФІЛОЛОГІЇ  
КАФЕДРА ПРАКТИКИ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ



# АКТУАЛЬНІ ПРОБЛЕМИ СУЧАСНОЇ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ ФІЛОЛОГІЇ

СТУДЕНТСЬКИЙ НАУКОВИЙ ВІСНИК

PHILOLOGY



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In our further researches the examples of exercises from some Internet resources will be proposed for teaching receptive types of speech activity the students of senior school.

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#### FACTORS INFLUENCING YOUNG LANGUAGE LEARNERS' DEVELOPMENT

Teachers who are supposed to teach young learners have to be aware of specific characteristics which they should take into account preparing for teaching them. They have to distinguish between teenage learners and young learners because they are completely different age groups and every group has its specifications. In Ukraine it is not unusual that English teachers in primary schools teach teenage learners as well as young learners and they have to know how to teach young learners.

S. Phillips describes young learners as children from the first year of formal schooling – five or six years old (in Ukraine it is six or seven years old) to eleven or twelve years of age. This mostly corresponds with the first four classes of primary school in Ukraine. She also adds that the age is not the most important aspect the teacher should consider but it is more about how mature the children are. “There are many factors that influence children’s maturity: for example, their culture, their environment (city or rural), their sex, the expectations of their peers and parents” [5, 3]. M. Vagnerova confirms it and adds that children receive their parents’ attitude towards school and education and it can influence children’s motivation towards school work. It is a very important period in a child’s life for many reasons.

In Ukraine, when children are six years old, they start to attend the first year of primary school. When there are some problems in child’s development, for example, the child is not enough socially, physically or mentally mature, their parents are suggested to let the child stay in the kindergarten one

more year and start school one year later. But this is only a small number in the total number of children starting school at the age of six.

Bert N. Adams presents what school readiness includes: to concentrate learners' attention, to adapt the lessons and co-existence with other learners and the teacher, to be able to draw, write with teacher's help, to follow the others' speech, to think logically, to understand the sense of specific restrictions and stress connected with school (restrictions in movements, not to speak, follow the lesson carefully), to understand their duties and try to fulfil them, to control their emotions, to cooperate with other children.

It is the time when "the learner is a child who becomes a subject of education. But when he/she becomes a learner, he/she does not stop to be a child and in this new role there starts an important period of children's life way which often influences conditions of their future independent development" [3]. This opinion is also supported by Scott and Ytreberg who conclude that this life period "covers some of the most vital years in a child's development. All education, including learning a foreign language, should contribute positively to that development" [9, 1].

The first years of primary school are a new period in children's life. It is a big step and change for the children. It is an important pass between the kindergarten and primary school. "It could be a cheerful experience which will start the period of expectations of something great, important and entirely new in the child's life" [3]. P. Rican agrees with these facts that it is a period which means a radical life change and that the beginning of education determines the character of following years more than anything else. The school means a change from games to school work and duties. But on the other hand, compared to the previous life period and the following one, this time is quite calm and happy [8, 145]. M. Vagnerova concludes it and confirms that it is a time which brings a child higher social prestige but also higher requirements and emphasis on their observance. She also adds that the time of beginning the school was not set randomly. At the age of six to seven there are different developmental changes which are conditioned with maturing and learning [10, 136].

According to the abovementioned authors it is a very important life period and the beginning of forming children's attitudes towards duties, education, teachers and the school itself and so teachers' awareness of all these facts plays a crucial part of their teaching young learners. Teachers have to know what changes proceed in children's body and mind. They are physical as well as mental changes and also changes in their social behaviour.

**The aim of the article** is to study specific characteristics of young learners and identify factors that influence young language learners' development.

It is evident that the teacher has to have a professional knowledge and approach to the educational process because in these early years he/she can influence the child's development very positively but, on the other hand, unprofessional teaching can lead to the beginning of children's illnesses, it can hamper or stop their development in some areas. As Reilly and Ward state, "They have many years of learning ahead of them and they will have enough hurdles to jump later on and if their first experience of English is pleasurable, they will have a positive attitude towards it for the rest of their lives" [7, 14].

There are certain factors that influence children's development. These factors can be more important than the age itself and the years at primary school are very important in the children's intellectual, physical, emotional and social development. They go through a series of stages, progressively acquiring skills that are thought necessary by the society they live in.

In our paper we consider the stages of young learners' development and factors that have an effect on it.

*Physical development.* P. Rican gives us basic data about the physical development of young learners. The average boy grows from 117 to 145 cm in the period between 6 and 11 years of age. An eleven-year-old girl is about one centimetre taller than the boy. The weight of the boy goes from 22 to 37 kilos and the girl weighs half a kilo more. The child has the second set of teeth which means a change in the position of jaw-bones and the shape of a lower part of the face. There is also a change in the shape of lips. The brain still grows in this life period but at about the age of 10 its growing is much

slower. It is now nearly completely developed but the development of cell connections will continue until the age of about 21.

Capacity of children's organism is incredible if we consider that the children are still in movement but in this period they cannot work with their power. They exhaust themselves very quickly but compared to adults they can gain new power very quickly.

Movements start to be skilful – they can skip, ride a bike, throw the ball better. These new skills and higher achievement make children feel very happy and it is because they are aware of their improvement. This physical power and skills also decide about especially boys' status in the group. Small and weak ones can become outsiders because the influence of adults is now much smaller than in the pre-school period and the children have to rely only on themselves.

The fine motor activity is not exact yet and it is because the coordination between eyes and movements of fingers is formed. This can cause some problems in writing in the first years of school.

*Cognitive development.* Children start to think in a different way than before. There are some changes in their thinking which help to manage subject matter. On the other hand, their mental powers are still developing. J. Piaget calls this way of thinking the period of concrete logical operations and he adds that "it is necessary to wait until the child is seven or eight years old and he starts to create operations [11]. We can explain it as thinking which operates with the reality or ideas/symbols which have a clear, concrete content. The children rely on their own experience in working with different things and contacts with other people. It is important to give support to the teachers' lesson with visual aids and a possibility to check the explanations on a concrete example.

There are more different criteria for concrete logical operations: conservation – the child is able to understand permanency of substance of a particular object although its outer features change. J. Piaget gives an example of pouring liquid. Children of this age now understand that if the liquid is poured from a glass A to a narrower glass B or to a wider glass C, it is still the same amount of liquid. It means children learn about the term conservation derived from pre-operational reactions. He describes concrete operations as the form of a transition between actions and more general logical structures. These structures can be sorting, ordering. Grouping is a specific feature of these structures and it consists in creating gradual links which consist of unification of direct operations. It means that the children are now able to sort or order some objects according to a key and it is not a random choice.

Children's ability to use concrete logical operations influences positively the understanding of the time. They can order events and they understand the term earlier and later. The children know that there exists a calendar, that seasons and days of the week change, they create a map of individually important events. They start to learn the time and use it for their time estimation.

Logical operations are developed by learning and school teaching addresses the understanding of connections and relations. It means that logical thinking is developed at school. The strategy of thinking is also developed at school. It means the approach to problem solving. The strategy of thinking can be characterized as searching a way how to do it. School children can concentrate on details and their mutual relations. They are able to get necessary information which is needed to solve the task. They can repeat necessary information and they fix knowledge which can be useful for problem solving.

School children learn strategies and to use them in a more suitable way. Three ways can be mentioned at this age: learning by a trial and error which is usually spontaneous, the children find the solution by chance and they will remember it. The second way is a logical derivation on the basis of previous experience and the last one is learning by copying when the child copies the solution which the other children used successfully.

*Social development.* Social development is influenced by social groups which the children are in. This is the age when social requests of the school are more important and it is necessary to orientate in this new environment and to acquire desirable way to behave. The role of peers is important but it is still the age when adults are more important.

The child gets the role of a schoolboy/schoolgirl which includes two partial roles – the role of a pupil and the role of a classmate. The role of a pupil is given by the school rules and it is always a subordinate role. The society creates a norm of a pupil and when the child behaves in accordance with

this norm it is rewarded. On the other hand, when the child does something different it is rewarded negatively. This is the way how the school influences another development of a child's personality. The way how the child will master the role of a classmate will influence his future strategies of behaviour and informal social relations.

When the children are in the first class they behave as a herd which follows the leader and when they do not have him they break up. All individuals are tied to a leader – the teacher. Closer relations appear among children sitting near one another in the classroom or those having a common way to school. When they are in the third form, there is a bigger solidarity among friends and the teacher's authority and influence are weaker. In the fourth and fifth forms the group of children can show their attitude, interest and demands.

Does younger mean better? When speaking about a foreign language it is the English language which will be taken into account here because it is the wide-spread foreign language in the world. "Teaching English to children has become a worldwide phenomenon due to the international expansion of English teaching combined with the general commitment of governments worldwide to reduce the starting age of learning English and include it in the curriculum in the primary school" [6, 3]. As mentioned above the English language demand is increasing and the idea of early English teaching is supported by the official documents from the Ministry of Education and Science, by psychologists and other authors who deal with this question. They all point out that there are a lot of advantages in teaching English to young learners because "young learners have the advantage of being great mimics, are often unselfconscious, and are usually prepared to enjoy the activities the teacher has prepared for them" [5, 5]. Young children are good at copying sounds and the rhythm of a new language and patterns of intonation. As Pinter mentioned, "Younger learners are less anxious and less inhibited and, overall, they can spend more time devoted to the language compared with those who start later" [6, 29].

L. Cameron confirms that "it has long been hypothesised that children learn a second language better than adults, and this is often used to support the early introduction of foreign language teaching" [2, 13]. This belief was originally supported by the critical period hypothesis. Scovel defined the critical period hypothesis as "the notion that language is best learnt during the early years of childhood, and that after about the first dozen years of life, everyone faces certain restrictions in the ability to pick up a new language" [1, 20]. L. Cameron enters into details and states that "young children can learn a second language particularly effectively before puberty because their brains are still able to use the mechanisms that assisted first language acquisition" [2, 13]. The original idea comes from Eric Lenneberg (1967) who said that "brain plasticity was only conducive to language learning puberty" [6, 29]. It means that young learners learn a foreign language similarly to learning their mother tongue, in a natural way without thinking about grammar structures and separate meanings of words, and after puberty "learners seem incapable of acquiring a native-like accent" [1, 21]. Young learners are more holistic learners, it means that "on the one hand, they respond to the meaning underlying the language used and do not worry about individual words or sentences, on the other hand, they do not make the analytical links that older learners do" [5, 5].

This hypothesis has a lot of supporters among psycholinguists but there are also studies which are against that and which say that there is no evidence that the difference is so great. Lightbown and Spada suggest that "where native-like proficiency in a second language is the goal, then learning benefits from an early start, but when the goal is communicative ability in a foreign language, the benefits of an early start are much less clear" [4, 14] and "learners who start later, at ten or twelve, catch up very quickly with those who begin learning when younger" [1, 21]. Older learners' later start can be compensated in some ways. They are more analytical and give attention to details which helps them with their foreign language learning.

To sum up, it is not only the age itself which brings advantages in the second language learning. An early start is influenced by many factors – levels of motivations and confidence, differences in language aptitude and personality, contextual factors – the quality of teaching and provision of adequate time for learning. It is a very important time in a child's life. The child experiences a lot of changes and beginning of school is one of the most significant ones. The child's

role changes and first school attitudes and opinions are formed. The school should contribute positively to development of these opinions and teachers should take into account all changes which happen in the child's body and mind.

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#### **ТЕСТУВАННЯ НА УРОКАХ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ: ПРИНЦИПИ ВПРОВАДЖЕННЯ ТА НЕОБХІДНІ ІНТЕРВЕНЦІЇ**

Невід'ємною частиною навчального процесу є перевірка знань, засвоєних учнями. Контроль та оцінка є не лише завершальним етапом певного змістового блоку, а й взаємопов'язаною ланкою у навчальній діяльності особистості. Крім того, це спосіб виявити сильні та слабкі сторони учнів, рівень їх самостійності та активності. Перевірка знань учнів допомагає у встановленні ефективності методів навчання та внесенні певних корективів в навчальний процес, задля вдосконалення його засобів, змісту та організації. Контроль – це не лише засіб оцінювання учнів та впровадження корективів, але й стимул навчальної діяльності учнів. Тому, цей процес повинен завжди бути позитивно-орієнтованим, мотиваційним для учнів та вчителів; надихати на нові звершення, на досягнення позитивних результатів та поставленої мети.

У сучасній школі, серед методів контролю знань, найбільшої популярності набуває саме тестування. Даний метод містить у собі альтернативні відповіді, де учень обирає правильну/ правильні, аргументуючи свій вибір. Тест вирізняється більшою об'єктивністю та незалежністю з-поміж інших методів оцінювання, оскільки результати тестування не піддаються впливу суб'єктивізму вчителя, а є інструментом вимірювання, функція якого полягає в тому, щоб поставляти кількісну інформацію [4, 269].



## ЗМІСТ

ФОНЕТИЧНА, ЛЕКСИЧНА ТА ГРАМАТИЧНА СИСТЕМИ МОВИ І МЕТОДИ ЇХ ДОСЛІДЖЕНЬ .....	4
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Актуальні проблеми сучасної іноземної філології

СТУДЕНТСЬКИЙ НАУКОВИЙ ВІСНИК

АКТУАЛЬНІ ПРОБЛЕМИ СУЧАСНОЇ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ ФІЛОЛОГІЇ

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