

Development of communication skills in elementary school children in the process of education

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Abstract—Realization of motivation to communicate in elementary school children builds the foundation for their socialization for the whole life. However, the systemic realization of a targeted programme-based activity aimed at the formation of communication skills in elementary school children is not an easy task. The purpose of the research is to study the possibility of development of communication skills in elementary school children in the process of education with the implementation of a targeted psychological and educational programme. The study consisted of three stages: a desktop analysis, an experimental research, and a data analysis. We applied such theoretical methods as an analysis of professional literature, compilation of the information, and simulation, and such empirical methods as an analysis technique of the level of communication skills formation in elementary school children by Rozhkov M.I., a test for evaluating communication skills adapted for elementary school children by Sinyavskiy V.V. and Fedoroshin V.A., and a test for assessing the attitude towards a class in children from 7 to 10 years of age by Lutoshkin A.N. We performed the Wilcoxon T test with the use of SPSS Version 23 software programme. We also created a programme for the development of communication skills. The study showed that the implemented programme of the development of communication skills in elementary school children resulted in statistically valid positive changes and proved the possibility of the development of communication skills in elementary school children with the use of a targeted programme.

Keywords—development, communication skills, elementary school, children, process of education

I. INTRODUCTION

The most accurate and complete definition of communication skills would be defining them as a system of conscious communication activities that allow to creatively use knowledge to establish and maintain advantageous relationships with people [6, 9, 22]. They include such elements as the ability to listen, to express oneself, to behave in a conflict situation [2, 13, 20], self-esteem and empathy [15, 18, 21].

In all types of communication skills (interpersonal communication, interpersonal interaction, interpersonal perception) communication with peers is particularly important, as it is the cornerstone of a person's life [3, 6, 11] and their personal growth [19, 23, 24]. Due to their age-related characteristics elementary school children psychologically prefer games. Games develop communication skills, as they reflect human relationships and imitate norms and standards of social behaviour. Usually games have a social nature and represent the rules of a community and social environment [4, 8, 14]. One of the main functions of collective games is communication; therefore, such games unite children, establish emotional contacts between them and relieve their emotional stress through a joint activity.

Collective activities have a distinctive feature, which is a high level of mutual interdependence between the participants in terms of social contacts [4, 5, 12, 16]. Communication is the main source of energy in a game that charges its emotional element [1, 10]. Without contacts, cooperation and mutual understanding it is not possible for children to play together. During games children develop not only the skill of following the game's rules, but also the skill of communication.

The purpose of the study was to look into the possibility of development of communication skills in elementary school children in the process of education with the implementation of a targeted psychological and educational programme.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

In the study we applied a set of methods and techniques. Theoretical ones included an analysis of professional literature, compilation of the information, and simulation [25]. Empirical research consisted of three stages: a desktop analysis, an experimental research, and a data analysis. We created a programme of development of communication skills, self-control of aggression and hostility, self-reflection and self-examination, adaptive modes of behaviour,

emotional stability, reasonable self-esteem and moral qualities. We used three techniques [25]: an analysis technique of the level of communication skills formation in elementary school children by Rozhkov M.I., a test for evaluating communication skills adapted for elementary school children by Sinyavskiy V.V. and Fedoroshin V.A., and a test for assessing the attitude towards a class in children from 7 to 10 years of age by Lutoshkin A.N. We also performed the Wilcoxon T test for calculating mathematical statistics [17]. The latter was performed with the use of SPSS Version 23 software programme in order to verify the obtained data as statistically reliable.

The programme was implemented by an educational psychologist within the period from the 10th of November to the 3rd of December in the Chelyabinsk school No. 00. The sample comprised 25 children. The overall number of lessons was 16; each lesson was 30 minutes long. Two lessons were devoted to each part of the programme.

III. RESULTS

The findings of the analysis technique of the level of communication skills formation in elementary school children by Rozhkov M.I. showed that 12% of elementary school children improved their level of communication skills formation from low to average, and 4% - from average to high. These children became more eager to participate in collective games and defend their point of view, improved their self-esteem and increased their feeling of confidence in a group.

The findings of the test for evaluating communication skills in elementary school children by Sinyavskiy V.V. and Fedoroshin V.A. showed that 8% of children improved their communication skills level from low to below average, 8% - from below average to average, 4% - from average to above average, 4% - from above average to high. These children became more relaxed in a group and gained more confidence in showing initiative, establishing contacts with other people and making decisions when playing collective games and during simulations.

The findings of the test for assessing the attitude of children towards a class showed that 8% of elementary school children changed their opinion on the class from negative to neutral, 8% - from neutral to well-adapted, 4% - from well-adapted to very positive. These children started to view other people more positively, and it became easier for them to establish contacts with partners when playing collective games and during simulations.

To verify the obtained data as statistically reliable we put forward two hypotheses in the framework of the Wilcoxon T test.

Initially we assumed that the typical shift would be a shift in a common direction, and the not typical shift would be a shift in an uncommon direction.

H₀: Regarding the level of aggression, the rate of shifts in a common direction does not exceed the rate of shifts in an uncommon direction. The comparison of measurements before and after the programme showed no changes.

H₁: Regarding the level of aggression, the rate of shifts in a common direction does exceed the rate of shifts in an

uncommon direction. The comparison of measurements before and after the programme showed significant changes.

$$T_{crit} = 100 \text{ for } p = 0.05; T_{crit} = 76 \text{ for } p = 0.01$$

If the level of significance $p \leq 0.01$, then T_{emp} is within the zone of significance, therefore the rate of shifts in a common direction prevails conclusively.

TABLE I. STATISTICAL VALUES OF THE LEVEL OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS FORMATION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN BEFORE AND AFTER THE PROGRAMME

| No. | Statistical values | z | Asymp. Sig. [2-tailed] 9 [p] |
|--|---|---------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 | The level of communication skills formation [the Rozhkov technique] | -2.859 ^b | 0.004 |
| 2 | The level of communication skills | -2.750 ^b | 0.006 |
| 3 | The attitude towards a class | -2.632 ^b | 0.008 |
| z – statistical value of the the Wilcoxon's T; Asymp Sig. [2-tailed] 9 [p] – the level of significance of differences between the measured indicators before and after the programme | | | |

The level of significance p is lower than 0.01 in all the measured indicators, therefore it can be stated that the documented changes are not accidental and have significance level of 1%. Therefore it can be claimed that the margin of error of a mistake in differences between the indicators for the level of communication skills formation, the level of communication skills and the attitude towards a class before and after the programme is lower than 1%.

Thus, it can be stated with a high degree of certainty that elementary school children experienced positive changes in the development of communication skills after the implementation of the psychological and educational programme.

IV. CONCLUSION

So, the development of communication skills in elementary school children is characterized by slow increase rate; therefore it requires the realization of a programme-based psychological and educational activity. The research questions concern the formation of a comprehensive and coherent model of communication skills development, the realization of motivation to communicate in elementary school children, the implementation of a targeted programme-based activity aimed at the development of communication skills in elementary school children based on a subject-to-subject interaction.

The study showed that the conducted work on the development of communication skills in elementary school children resulted in statistically valid positive changes and proved the possibility of the development of communication skills in elementary school children with the use of a targeted programme. The advantages of the programme include its adaptation to age-related characteristic aspects of children, in particular an extensive use of games, conversations and simulations in the programme. We developed recommendations to teachers and parents on the formation of communication skills in elementary school children based on the findings of the tests.

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