

# The Expressive Reading as an Opportunity for Improvement of the Preschool Children's Speech

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**Abstract** — There are differences in the speech development among the preschool children when coming to the preschool. There they are expected to actively participate, to collaborate, to conclude and the most important to respond verbally according to the standards determined by the educator. When coming to kindergarten the child must understand 'what is learned, how to speak and to work as well as what the educator expects. This task will be easier for the children with improved speech. The children actually should learn how to interpret the educator's speech. They will be faced with traps starting from 'misheard to misunderstood words, or totally misunderstood words spoken by the educator.

From the above we can see the importance of the children's speech, the importance of the educator's role and what can be achieved by the creative dialogue between the educator and the child.

This work deals with the interactive communication between the educator and the children in preschool, or more precisely in what way through expressive texts can be removed some obstacles in the speech of the preschool children within the framework of the educational work of mother language.

**Keywords** — Children, Expressive Reading, Preschool, Skills.

## I. INTRODUCTION

For any observer of the modern world the term communication and the terms referring to the communication impose. We hear all the time: we live in a world of communication. Is this new? If the language is a feature of the man and if it is the primary goal for communication, then the man is a creature for communication- without claiming that he is only that. But the means he has for transmitting his messages multiply to the communication and provide wideness about which our ancestors didn't have a clue.

Since the communication in this work refers to the communication within the educational process we can define it within the framework of that system. The educational work refers to those who teach and those who learn. These features of the educational work can be defined as a whole of the teaching and the learning that comes from their interference. This mutual acting is realized through communication and interaction.

Starting from the fact that the preschool education is a primary, starting subsystem of the education, as well as from the features of the preschool education which sets the ground for the further education there is a need imposed for innovation and transformation in a direction of treating the child as an equal subject with its individuality and integrity.

All of this can't be realized without communication within the educational work in the preschool institutions. Actually, the interpersonal relation as a micro-relation is the fundamental unit where the educational work takes place. The education is realized with interpersonal communication and the goal is the development of the human. The education is such communication where a close interaction happens. The education is a form of interpersonal communication. Because of the previously said we can conclude that the problem of the communication is very important for the educational work and for the success of the education because the education itself depends on the success of the communication.

Even though the era we live in is called verbal era of the culture of the speech, we don't pay enough attention to it. The solid grounds for building good literacy are the 'blood brothers'- the thought and the speech. Because of the great importance of the speech within the framework of the educational work in the preschool institutions should be paid greater attention to the relation educator-child.

In order to be confirmed the previous exposition we should define the speaking behavior: The speech is a form of the learned human behavior that serves the man as a mean for personal expression and as a mean for interpersonal communication. It is a very important factor for the human development and for its socialization and it is a natural function of a normal child when the child will reach a necessary degree of experience. So, the linguistic skill is a learned reaction conditioned by the psychological and physical features of the body. [6]

## II. EXPRESSIVE SPEECH

Starting from our subject of the research, the interactive communication between the educator and the children in the preschool institutions in order the obstacles for the children's speech to be overcome, it was conducted an action research. That research is based on the use of expressive texts by the educator and the researcher which will help in overcoming the obstacles and in improving the children's speech and the whole interaction and communication in the target preschool group. For that purpose we should explain the terms expressive speech, expressive reading and then to come to the expressive texts that are instrument for improving the quality of the children's speech in the preschool institutions.

Expressive speech is the use of words, sentences, gestures and writing to convey meaning and messages to others. Expressive language skills include being able to label objects in the environment, describe actions and events, put words together in sentences, use grammar

correctly. These skills are important for the children to be able to express their wants and needs, thoughts and ideas, argue a point of view, develop their use of language in writing and engage in successful interactions with others. [2]

The expressive speech is the speech of the interlocutor or the content of what we are talking about, the emotional experiences of what he says, the basic components of the expressive speech in an artistic way and calmly influences the hearers. The expressive speech has an important role in the development of the intellectual and the aesthetic abilities of the children. [9] In that context we can mention the following important tasks of the expressive speech:

- To achieve correlation with the expressive reading and drawing, the drama and the scene expression;
- To stimulate natural intonation, balanced pace and strength of the voice, correct emphasis of the words according to the Macedonian emphasis
- To know to express the personalities in the literary works
- To be able for independent expressive telling of prose and poesies

The expressive speech is incorporated in every area and every component of the culture of speech which is a priority goal of the educational area and it should be cherished in every part of the educational process.

### **III. BASIC COMPONENTS OF THE EXPRESSIVE SPEECH**

The basic components of the expressive speech are:

- Diction
- Intonation
- Modulation
- Pace
- Rhythm
- Emphasis
- Pause
- Dynamic

As a literary device, diction refers to the choice of words and style of expression that an author makes and uses in a work of literature. Diction can have a great effect on the tone of a piece of literature, and how readers perceive the characters. [3] The diction is clear, precise, clear and impeccable sounding of every phoneme, words, and sentence. A basic precondition for good diction is the normal functioning of the breathing system: the throat, the soft palate, the lower jaw, the lips and the tongue. It can be clear or unclear depending on the articulator. Suitable literary works for exercising and improving are: counting-out game, riddles, rhymes, tongue twisters etc.

Intonation, in phonetics, means melodic pattern of an utterance. Intonation is primarily a matter of variation in the pitch level of the voice. Intonation conveys differences of expressive meaning, like surprise, anger, wariness etc. In many languages, intonation serves a grammatical function, distinguishing one type of phrase or sentence from another. [1] The intonation is a unity of musicality, harmony, rhythm and modulation that make the speech more suggestive and more persuasive. It is very important

for the development of the cognitive and the emotional mentally processes. The intonation can be lowered or it can be kept on the same level. We differ:

- Natural (regular)
- Emotional/expressive
- Logical/intellectual intonation.

The modulation is harmoniously lowering and rising of the voice and transition from one to another speech adequately to the content being interpreted. Modulating your voice means moving the pitch up and down. The alternative is to keep an even pitch throughout the sentence, which at best will sound odd and at worst dull, boring or confusing. A change in frequency in speaking tone provides the listener with a signal that something is happening. Modulation can thus be used to enhance emphasis in words, with rising and lowering tones adding subtle meaning. [8]

Pacing is a stylistic device, which shows how fast a story unfolds. It is because when readers feel frustration in the length of the story, the writers use different techniques to control the pace of the story. In simple words, pacing is moving a story forward with a certain speed. [4] The pace is an integral part of the intonation of the sentence. In the speech, in the recitation and in the reading there are: fast pace, slow pace and interruptive pace.

The word rhythm is derived from *rhythmos* (Greek) which means, “measured motion”. Rhythm is a literary device which demonstrates the long and short patterns through stressed and unstressed syllables particularly in verse form. [5] It is evenly balanced and alternating changing of stressed and unstressed voice elements and meanings which inhale liveliness, flexibility, relief, order and organization to the speech, reading, reciting, narration and other methodological procedures. Expressive readers speed up and slow down when they read. They also take appropriate pauses- big ones at the end of a sentence, smaller ones in between, after commas, and also at logical points like phrase and clause boundaries. Changes in rhythm often help readers understand how small parts of sentences combine to create a complete thought. [11]

Rhythm in writing acts as beat does in music. The use of rhythm arises from the need that some words are to be produced more strongly than others. They might be stressed for longer period of time. Hence, the repeated use of rhythmical patterns of such accent produces rhythmical effect which sounds pleasant to the mind as well as to the soul. In speech, rhythm is used unconsciously to create identifiable patterns. Moreover, rhythm captivates the audience and readers alike by giving musical effect to a speech or a literary piece. [5]

The accent is the most subtle element that sounds our speaking. For the educational work especially important are: the grammar, the logical and the mental accents that make the language colorful and attractive and its content live, striking and attractive.

The pause is a temporary rest, immediate stop of the articulating speech movements. During the oral speaking we make pause between the words that have relative semantic independence and wholeness. The educational staff should pay attention to the so called psychological

pauses that give live of the thoughts, jocundity and expressiveness of the pictures and totally motivates the children to listen with interest and attention.

The dynamic is the energy of the voice speech manifested within the frame from lowest and strongest articulated phonemes, phonetic groups and word groups.

Beside these components also important is the strength of the voice as one of the conditions for beautiful speech. The speech should have decent strength of the voice, or not very loud nor very quiet. The strength of the voice should be normal but still strong enough for all the children to listen. The talking wouldn't be nice if it is articulated with pitchy voice or if it is monotonous. That is why the children should be taught to adjust their voice according to the situation.

The voice exercises can be:

- Exercises with stage puppets
- Exercises in the basic components of the expressive speech and the expressive reading
- Exercises in the expressive speech through the expressive possibilities of the movie.

These exercise refer to the development of the poetic hearing, the perception of the hearing, the speech techniques (the proper breathing, the clear speech, the right diction, the ability for managing with the intensity of the voice pace)

The educators should pay special attention to the following important indicators:

- The pronunciation of the voices to be right and clear, grammatically correct
- The words' emphasizing in the text to be with balanced speech speed according to the context.
- The intonation of the speech to provide adequate melodically rhythmic fluency of the speech
- The personal example of the speech by the educators and the parents that should be natural with balanced height of voice.

#### **IV. EXPRESSIVE TEXTS READING**

The questions are not the only way for making changes in children's speech, also some obstacles can be overcome by using expressive read texts that are sufficient motivation for correct pronunciation and speech by the children. The reading is a special satisfaction for the children if for its hearing there is a proper situation and atmosphere that will arouse the children's fantasy and will encourage them to listen carefully. For the use of the expressive reading very important are: the right choice of the text, the way of reading and the preparation of the educator and the children. When choosing the texts the educator is guided by:

- The age of the children, their ability for understanding, the speech development
- The complex educational tasks that should be realized by the reading: the moral-ethic, the aesthetic, the level of intelligence, the level of the good speech, etc.

- The type of the literary work (its size, content, the linguistic structure of the text).
- The wider educational goals the text sets
- The newsworthiness- the natural, social and educational and the newsworthiness of the children's experiences
- The themes of the texts to be diverse
- The chosen texts to give possibility for expressive reading (realization of all components of the expressive reading: articulation, intonation, pausing, accenting). [10]

In order for children to become more fluent in their reading, they need to learn how to read with expression. This helps them to better understand and enjoy the text that they are reading. Many times children can get caught up in simply reading the text correctly, so as a teacher it is vital to teach the importance of reading with expression. This lesson will focus on this technique of reading instruction. The children will learn to read with expression through modeling and individual practice with a specific text. [7]

For reaching the goal of the directed activity there should be a good preparation of the educator who studies the text, sets the places of every component of the expressive reading, practices the reading and measures the time. Through the reading and its quality should be set as closer as possible relationship with the children who will experience the text in the best possible way.

The expressive speech is the speech of the interlocutor meaning he understands the content of the said, emotionally experiences what he says, artistically expresses the basic components of the expressive speech and influences the listeners. The expressive speech has a meaningful part in the development of the intellectual and aesthetic abilities of the children.

The saying: 'What I hear is what I talk and what I remember and what I work is what I know' very precisely directs toward the development of the cultivation of the speech, which means what the children listen is what they say and in order to remember something they must have visibility. What I work is what I know means that we should attempt in everyday communication to cherish the expressiveness of the speech because only through correct talking we cherish the Macedonian literary language.

##### ***Expressive texts reading by the educators***

- The pronunciation of votes to be correct and clean, grammatically accurate
- the emphasis on the words in the text to be with a moderate voice speed conformity of the content is expressed, to be careful about the pauses in speech.
- The intonation and the toning of the speech to provide adequate melodic and rhythmic speech fluency with proper grammar, logic and psychological stress
- The personal voice example of the educators and parents which means naturally speaking with moderate severity and amount of voice

***Changes in the child’s dictionary***

The quantity refers to the fund of the dictionary and the quality to the proper use of the words. The children's vocabulary is enriching daily going in quantity but also in quality, i.e. the correct pronunciation of word strings. Actually there are changes in children's vocabulary, they develop logical connected speech, correct pronunciation and correct use of existing words and the other newly achieved. However the quantity of children's vocabulary easily can be investigated because it is a mechanical determination of the number of words that a child has. The latter refers to the volume of children’s words.

***Changes in the speech of children affected by the texts for expressive reading***

- ❖ development of poetic hearing
- ❖ developing heard perception
- ❖ developing the technique of speech (formation of proper breathing, clear pronunciation, proper diction, ability to manage the intensity and pace of voice that assumes exercise naturalness of intonation)

**V. SUBJECT OF THE RESEARCH**

Subject of this research is: A model for overcoming the obstacles in voice expression of the children in the pre-school institutions.

**VI. GENERAL HYPOTHESIS**

The model for promotion of the expressive reading has a positive impact on the overcoming the obstacles in the voice expression of pre-school children.

**VII. RESEARCH PROCEDURES AND INSTRUMENTS**

During the survey we used a number of procedures and instruments. Among them are the following:

**Procedures:**

- Survey of educators in preschools
- Survey of parents of each group of preschools
- Audio recording of the course of the educational activity of the mother tongue in preschool education
- Observation of verbal communication educator-child

**Instruments:**

- Questionnaire for educators
- Questionnaire for parents
- Protocol for analysis of the audio recording and transcripts
- Protocol for monitoring of the verbal communication educator-child
- The protocol for analysis of the audio recording and transcripts consists of three columns where in the first column refers to the number of the operations. The second column refers to the categories ie the actions of the teacher and the children as best it can follow the course of directed activity. The third column contains the registration of specific activities of the teacher and the children during the

activities directed at language in preschool institutions.

As instrument in this research we use protocol for observation of verbal communication educator-child, which is consisted from three columns.

The first column is the ordinal number. The second column covers the categories that apply to verbal communication between teacher and children, with the main emphasis on children activities. In the third column are registered conditions, i.e. the results of the audio recording of children.

This paper shows the results of the audio recording of children using texts expressive reading and overcoming obstacles in expressing reactions. The following table analyzes the conditions registered in the categories of activities of the teacher, individual activities of the children, parts of targeted activity in which the teacher is reading texts and the results achieved by the children.

**Table.1** Results of the performed audio recording of children during directed activities at native language using text for expressive reading

Number	Categories	Registered conditions (elements)
1	Dominant activities of the teacher during the targeted activity	
	- Oral presentation of the educational content	9
	- Method of talking with children	9
	- Asks the children about the content	9
	- Dialogue with the children	9
	- Expressive reading of texts	9
2	Individual activities of the children	
	- Listening	9
	- Asking questions	2
	- Discussion educator-child	2
	- Group discussion	2
	- Independent work	0
3	Phases of the directed activity in which the educator is reading expressive texts	
	- Introduction of the directed activity	0
	- Main part of the directed activity	9
	- Final part of the directed activity	0
4	After finishing the expressive reading, the children	
	- Show interest for expressive retelling of the text	9
	- Show interest about dramatization of the expressive read text	9

During the performed research was carried audio recording of 9 educational groups, 3 of each educational group respectively (small, medium and large). The conclusions that we came through the analysis of transcripts are the following:

- dominant activities of the educator during the targeted activity in native language by using text for expressive reading logging verbal presentation of educational content, method of conversation with the children, asks children about content, dialogue with children expression of texts helps the children to express themselves. Of particular importance for the investigation is the last category of the above, he helps children to express themselves by what the stray certain speech problems among them, that improves speech expression. From the analysis of the transcripts we can conclude that this activity of the educators was performed in all 9 educational groups.
- regarding to the second category, individual children's activities, we can conclude that the dominant category is the category of listening, which once again confirms the results of questionnaires for educators and parents as well as the results obtained through observation of children during the targeted activity native language and expressive lyrics. Other categories, asking questions by educators, discussion educator-child and group discussion of children appeared only in two educational groups (large group), indicating the need for their intensification. The last category, independent work of children was not observed in any group, probably due to the nature of educational activity or expressive reading of texts.
- all expressive texts were read and processed in the main part of the targeted activity in the mother tongue, because it was the aim of the targeted activity.
- after the expressive reading and processing of the corresponding expressed text, with all 9 educational groups, almost all children expressed interest in speaking and dramatization manner of expression text which once again confirms the results of questionnaires for educators and parents as well as the results obtained through observation of children during the targeted activity in native language and expressive lyrics. The results of the analysis of transcripts indicate that during these two activities children, mostly comes to removing the obstacles in a speech to them by the educator, who comes to improving the overall speech utterance reactions. In this way, once again confirming the results obtained by analyzing questionnaires filled out by parents, and referring to the improvement of spoken expression in their children using texts expressive reading, and the results of observation, where these two categories emerge as strongest.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research, quantitative and qualitative data processing, we can draw some important conclusions. They can be representative, by their nature, because the sample used for the survey has the characteristics of representativeness. However, it is obvious that the results are still insufficient for full and absolute conclude. Therefore the conclusions we derive are considered more or less indicative, with certain significance. From the research we may perceive that the introduction of the action, in this case auditory material recorded with expressive texts greatly improves children's speech expression in pre-school groups. Namely, through their hearing during the targeted activity we improve:

- Plain speech,
- Flattest diction,
- Naturalness of intonation and
- Logically connected speech.

This research relates to only one aspect of this broad and complex area. Its dimensions indicate the need to explore a number of other problems related to the investigated problem in this paper, connected to the interactive communication between educator and children in pre-school institutions.

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