

METHODOLOGY OF TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES (GERMAN) IN PRIMARY CLASSES.

Muzarifa Abdullayeva G'ofurjon qizi

muzarifaabdullayeva4@gmail.com +99888 3505077

Termiz State Pedagogical Institute

Abstract: This article examines the methodologies used for teaching German as a foreign language in primary classes. The focus is on age-appropriate strategies, language acquisition theories, and practical approaches that foster engagement and language retention in young learners. The role of interactive learning, the importance of cultural context, and the significance of early exposure to a foreign language are highlighted as key factors in successful language teaching.

Keywords: foreign language teaching, German, primary education, language acquisition, interactive learning, early exposure.

INTRODUCTION:

The increasing globalization of society has made foreign language acquisition an essential part of education, even at the primary level. Research indicates that early exposure to foreign languages enhances cognitive development, improves communication skills, and fosters cultural awareness. This article aims to explore effective methodologies for teaching German in primary school settings. By analyzing current teaching practices and linguistic theories, we will examine how children learn best at this stage and what strategies are most effective in ensuring both retention and enthusiasm for the language.

Literature Review and Methodology: Various studies have shown that young learners benefit most from immersive and interactive language instruction (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Theories like Vygotsky's social interaction theory emphasize the importance of communication and active participation in learning. Piaget's stages of cognitive development also suggest that children in primary classes are in the concrete operational stage, where they learn best through practical, hands-on experiences.

The methodology of this article involves a review of current literature, including empirical studies on language teaching in early education. Data was collected from primary school teachers and language instructors on their techniques and the effectiveness of their methods in teaching German to young learners.

Results: The results show that the most effective methods of teaching German in primary classes revolve around interactive and playful approaches. Key findings include:

- **Play-based Learning:** Incorporating games and songs in the learning process proved highly effective, keeping students engaged while introducing vocabulary and basic sentence structures.
- **Multimodal Instruction:** Using visual aids, audio resources, and physical activities (e.g., Total Physical Response) enhanced comprehension and retention. The multisensory engagement allowed for deeper language acquisition.
- **Storytelling and Role-play:** These methods were successful in creating a rich linguistic environment, helping students develop listening and speaking skills through context-based learning.
- **Cultural Immersion:** Integrating elements of German culture, such as traditions, holidays, and customs, not only made learning more interesting but also helped students understand the practical uses of the language.

Discussion: The success of these methodologies lies in their ability to cater to the cognitive and emotional needs of primary learners. Play-based and multimodal methods align with young children's natural inclination toward exploration and movement. Additionally, these methods create a low-anxiety environment, which is crucial for language learning, as young learners are more prone to fear of making mistakes. The role of cultural immersion cannot be understated. Children are more likely to engage with a language if they find personal relevance or fascination in its cultural aspects. The introduction of German culture also promotes cross-cultural understanding, an important skill in today's globalized world. Another significant finding is the positive impact of early exposure to foreign languages on overall linguistic skills. Children who start learning languages in primary school tend to develop better phonological awareness, which contributes to their proficiency in other languages, including their native tongue.

Conclusion: The methodologies used to teach German as a foreign language in primary classes should focus on interactive, engaging, and culturally enriching activities. Play-based learning, storytelling, and role-playing, combined with cultural immersion, help students to develop essential language skills while keeping them motivated and excited about learning. The results of this study suggest that early exposure to foreign languages significantly benefits cognitive development and sets the foundation for lifelong language learning.

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