

Использование визуальных средств в обучении говорению учащихся 8-х классов на уроках английского языка

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Аннотация. Настоящая статья посвящена проблеме использования визуальных средств в обучении иноязычному говорению. В статье авторы дают теоретическое обоснование эффективности использования визуальных средств в обучении. Также в статье присутствует описание эксперимента по внедрению комплекса упражнений на основе визуальных средств в образовательный процесс обучающихся 8-х классов гимназии. Авторы проанализировали результаты эксперимента и отметили положительную динамику в развитии иноязычной речевой деятельности обучающихся.

Ключевые слова: принцип наглядности, визуализация, визуальные средства, устная речь, иностранный язык.

The Use of Visual Aids in Teaching Speaking to 8th Grade Students at The English Lessons

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Abstract. This article is devoted to the problem of the use of visual aids in teaching foreign language speaking. In the article, the authors provide a theoretical justification of the effectiveness of the use of visual aids in teaching. In addition, there is a description of the experiment on the ~~introduction~~ use of a set of exercises based on visual means in the educational process ~~of~~ with the 8th grade students of the gymnasium. The authors analyzed the results of the experiment and noted a positive dynamics in the foreign language oral speech of students.

Keywords: the principle of visibility, visualization, visual aids, oral speech, foreign language.

We live in the era of information and visualization. Visual means have become an integral part of our daily life. Every day we are constantly surrounded by an inexhaustible flow of information. Social networks are developing rapidly, presentation of information is simplified. Nowadays a person receives information not only through words and meanings, but through vivid images and simple visual signs as well. Perhaps clip thinking has become one of the ways to adapt to modern conditions of life [4, p. 15]. Thus, one of the most important goals of English language teaching today is the adaptation and modification of the language material to the needs and expectations, of modern teenagers.

During our teaching practice at school, we could not help but listen to teachers' complaints about today's teenagers. Many teachers complain that it is impossible to tear them away from their smart phones, to keep them motivated and encourage them to actively participate in class activities. Though it seems that instead of complaining about the so-called "thumb generation", we need to find a different approach to modern children and teenagers and add something new to the usual curriculum in terms of technologies, educational means and forms of work. This formed the basis for our study.

The object of our study is the process of teaching speaking to the 8th grade students with the help of visual aids in English lessons.

The subject of the study is the technology of using visual aids in the process of teaching English speaking skills to the 8th grade students.

We have put forward the following hypothesis: the development of speaking skills of the 8th grade students at English lessons will be more effective if:

- 1) a specially designed set of exercises based on the principle of visualization is used;
- 2) the visual aids used in the set of exercises stimulate learners' verbal and mental activity.

Thus, the goal of our study is to design an effective set of exercises for teaching speaking based on the analysis of the use of visual teaching aids in English lessons.

To achieve this goal it is necessary to solve a number of problems:

- To substantiate the principle of visualization as one of the fundamental principles of learning and highlight the main types of visualization;
- To consider the goals and problems of teaching a foreign language speaking to the students of the 8th grade;
- To determine the role of visual aids in teaching foreign language speaking;
- To create an effective set of exercises for teaching speaking.

In accordance with the problems, the following research methods were applied in the study: theoretical analysis of psychological, pedagogical and methodological literature on the problem; generalization of the methodological experience of modern authors on the technology of using visual means in teaching a foreign language and teaching in general; analysis and processing of materials collected during the study, conducting an experiment, quantitative and qualitative data analysis and evaluation of the results obtained.

There is no need to prove that speaking, as a type of speech activity, plays a leading role in mastering the English language as a means of communication. The purpose of teaching speaking in a foreign language lesson is the formation of such skills that would allow the student to use them in speech practice at the level of everyday communication.

The principle of visualization is an important moment in the development of human cognitive activity [3].

The use of visual aids in different forms among students ensures a more successful adaptation of the material and increases the students' interest, knowledge and proficiency in the English language. The technology of teaching with the help of visual means is not new and is periodically updated by teachers and methodologists in the framework of the theory and methods of teaching various subjects (P.E. Tenkhunen, Yu.A. Eliseeva, A. Dvornikova, E.N. Morozova, etc.). However, the question of how to make the use of visuals in teaching more effective, so that it really stimulates speech-thinking activity and corresponds to the expectations of modern learners, remains insufficiently developed.

If we briefly analyze, for example, an English course book "Starlight 8" by Baranova K.M., Dooley D., Kopylova V.V. [1], which is used at the gymnasium where we had our teaching practice, it becomes obvious that the visuals offered by the textbook are not enough to successfully learn the large amount of new vocabulary presented in the modules. Moreover, the visuals presented in the textbook are outdated and not very appealing to modern students. Therefore, the upgrade of visual images will help to represent the studied material in a more modern way for students, and as a result motivate them more to speak.

To confirm the above idea, we conducted an experiment at one of the schools of Murmansk.

Firstly, we observed the class for two weeks to identify the level of speaking skills of 27 8th grade students. The students of two groups (control and experimental) had to describe the picture according to the following criteria:

Describe the picture.

You will have to start in 1.5 minutes and speak for not more than 2 minutes (8 – 10 sentences).

Speak about:

- the place
- the action

- the appearance of the person
- whether you like the picture or not
- explain why

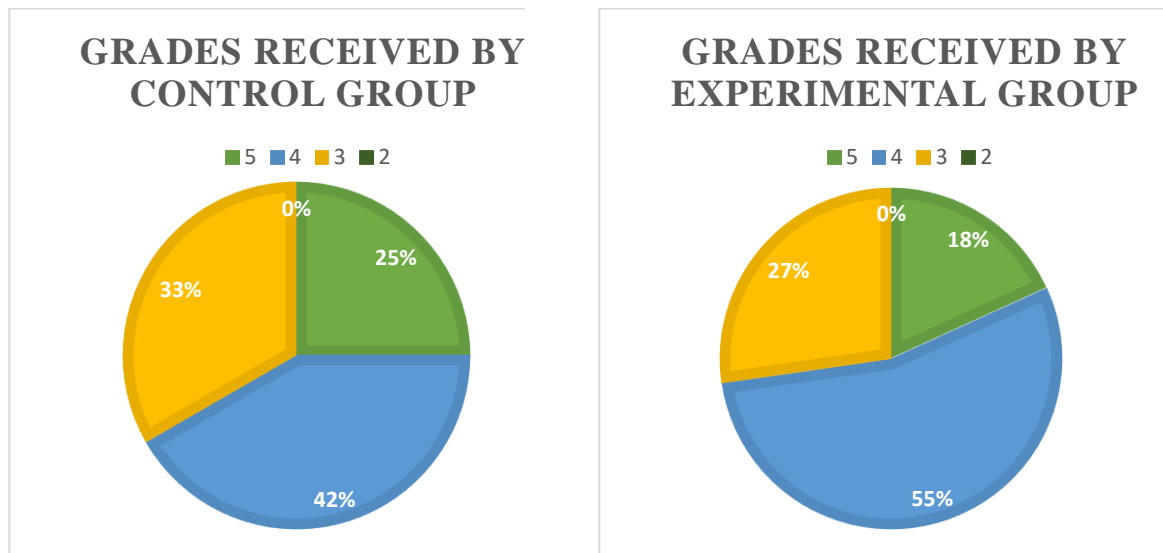


Fig. 1. Results of the speaking task

Most of the answers to the questions in both groups were *monosyllabic*, poor and hesitant.

Further, we designed a set of exercises with the visual aids for one the modules of the course book «Starlight 8» [1] and used it in the experimental group. The control group continued their studies doing the exercise from the course book only.

The exercises with visual aids that we created were used at different stages of the lessons.

1. We used the first exercise as a fun warm-up:

Students have to guess what is hidden in the picture (Fig. 2). They can only ask yes/no questions. This task is variable. Teachers can select pictures related to the topic of the module to practice vocabulary and afterwards use the full picture for grammar training (Present Continuous, ways of predicting the future).



Fig. 2. What is hidden in the picture?

2. Instagram is a very popular social network among teenagers. So, we can imagine what Instagram profiles of our favorite movie/cartoon characters would look like. To organize this activity, teachers need to know in advance about the preferences of students. At the stage of getting to know the students, we learned about their favorite films and cartoons, and used this information when creating an exercise. We started with a brainstorm of ideas about character profiles. Next, students were shown a photo (Fig. 3). Their task was to guess the caption. The learner whose guess was closest to the original won. Teachers can introduce a competitive moment and divide students into teams.



Fig. 3. Instagram profiles

3. To revise the vocabulary on traits of character, we offered students to imagine themselves as psychologists. They got a patient profile (photo, name, age, biography and complaints) (Fig. 4). The task was to “diagnose the case” based on the patient's complaints - to assign the patient's inherent traits of character. The task can be organized in a group, pair or individual format.

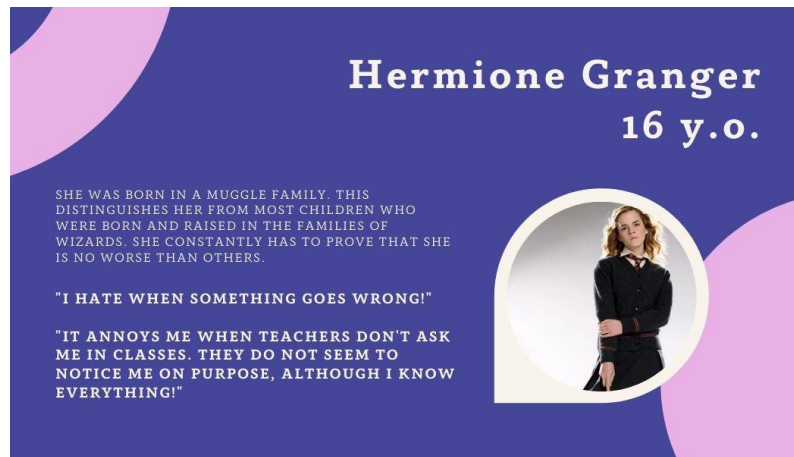


Fig. 4. Phsycologist

4. An excellent exercise that gives students a complete freedom of creativity is scribing. Scribing is a representation through graphic symbols that clearly shows essence and relationships within [2]. For example, when explaining grammar material, teacher can invite students to illustrate it using scribing (Fig. 5). Therefore, everyone will be attentive to the explanations of the teacher and in a form accessible to them will portray what they heard.



Fig. 5. Example of scribing

After the introduction of the set of exercises, we again conducted the class observation similar to one at the pre-experimental stage (Fig. 6).

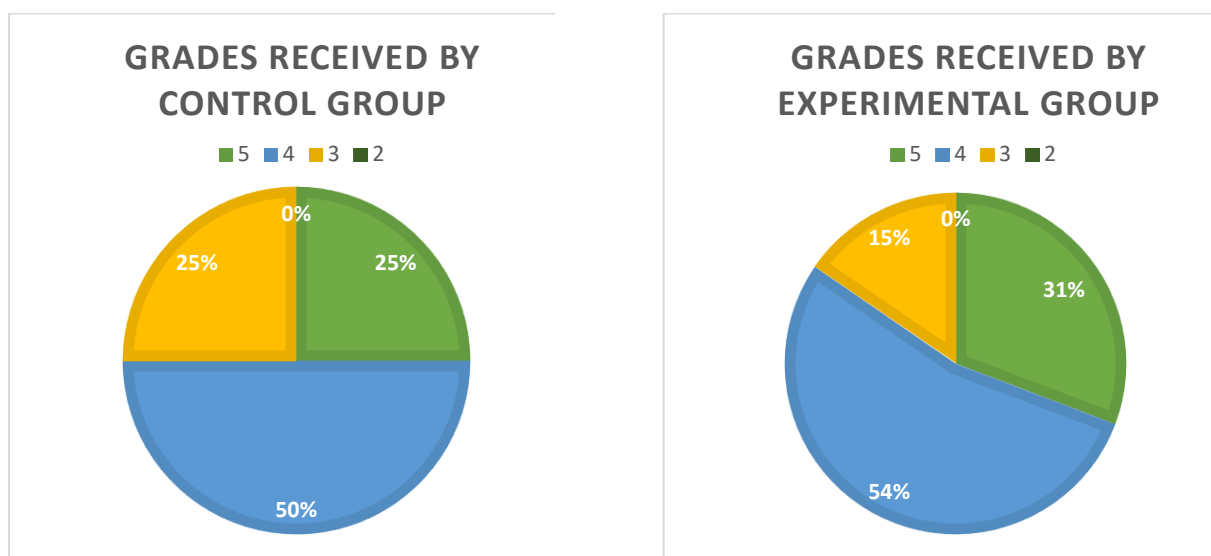


Fig. 6. Results of the speaking task 2

It should be noted that the descriptions became more polysyllabic, and more confident. Only two people received 3 points. Thus, we can confirm that the set of exercises based on the use of visual aids positively influenced the formation of learners' speaking skills.

As the result of the study, the following conclusions can be drawn: the visual aids used in language teaching must be up-to-date, appealing to the learners and creative. In order to enhance language learning visual means must be properly selected and integrated into the exercises in such a way so that to motivate speaking, stimulate thinking and help learners focus on the activities in class. We dare to assume that the use of visualization in foreign language education also enhances the emotional aspect in the learning activities of students and contributes to the creation of a friendly language environment according to the replies and reactions that we got from the students after having conducted our experiment at school.

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