

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF SPEECH ACTS

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the theoretical foundations of speech acts and their relationship with language, thinking, and speech development in early childhood. The research highlights that language and thinking are closely interconnected processes that shape human consciousness and communication. Speech acts are considered an essential mechanism through which individuals express ideas, emotions, and knowledge in social interaction. Special attention is given to the development of children's speech in preschool education, where vocabulary growth, grammatical structure, and coherent speech formation occur gradually through communication, play, and educational activities. The study also emphasizes the role of educators and adults in supporting children's linguistic and cognitive development through storytelling, guided dialogue, and repeated language practice. Furthermore, the paper discusses the importance of fluent speech, speech technique, and the ability to construct meaningful expressions as key elements of effective communication. The findings suggest that the development of speech competence and speech culture plays a crucial role in improving communication skills and social interaction in both educational and professional contexts.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu tadqiqot nutq aktlarining nazariy asoslarini hamda til, tafakkur va nutq rivojlanishi o'rtasidagi o'zaro bog'liqlikni o'rganishga bag'ishlangan. Tadqiqotda til va tafakkur inson ongini shakllantiruvchi hamda muloqotni ta'minlovchi o'zaro chambarchas bog'liq jarayonlar ekanligi ta'kidlanadi. Nutq aktlari ijtimoiy muloqot jarayonida fikrlar, his-tuyg'ular va bilimlarni ifodalashning muhim mexanizmi sifatida qaraladi. Ayniqsa, maktabgacha ta'lim davrida bolalarning nutq rivojlanishi, lug'at boyligining ortishi, grammatik tuzilmalarning shakllanishi va ravon nutqning rivojlanishiga alohida e'tibor qaratiladi. Tadqiqotda o'qituvchilar va kattalarning bolalarning nutqiy hamda kognitiv rivojlanishini qo'llab-quvvatlashdagi roli ham muhim omil sifatida ko'rsatib o'tiladi. Shuningdek, ravon nutq, nutq texnikasi va mazmunli fikr ifodalash qobiliyatlari samarali muloqotning asosiy elementlari sifatida tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot natijalari nutq madaniyati va nutq kompetensiyasini rivojlantirish ta'lim hamda professional faoliyatda samarali muloqotni ta'minlashda muhim ahamiyatga ega ekanligini ko'rsatadi.

Kalit so'zlar. nutq aktlari, til va tafakkur, nutq rivojlanishi, maktabgacha ta'lim, ravon nutq, muloqot, nutq texnikasi.

Аннотация. Данное исследование посвящено теоретическим основам речевых актов и взаимосвязи языка, мышления и развития речи в раннем возрасте. В работе подчеркивается, что язык и мышление являются тесно взаимосвязанными процессами, формирующими сознание человека и обеспечивающими коммуникацию. Речевые акты рассматриваются как важный механизм выражения мыслей, эмоций и знаний в процессе социального взаимодействия. Особое внимание уделяется развитию речи детей в дошкольном возрасте, когда происходит расширение словарного запаса, формирование грамматических структур и развитие связной речи. Также в исследовании подчеркивается важная роль педагогов и взрослых в поддержке языкового и когнитивного развития детей через рассказывание историй, диалог и регулярную языковую практику. Кроме того, рассматриваются значение связной речи, техники речи и способности к логическому выражению мыслей как ключевых элементов эффективной коммуникации. Результаты исследования показывают, что развитие речевой компетенции и культуры речи играет важную роль в повышении эффективности общения как в образовательной, так и в профессиональной деятельности.

Ключевые слова. речевые акты, язык и мышление, развитие речи, дошкольное образование, связная речь, коммуникация, техника речи.

Introduction. Language is one of the most essential tools through which people communicate, express their thoughts, and interact with society. The ability to use language effectively is closely connected with cognitive development, social experience, and cultural environment. From the earliest stages of life, language begins to shape human consciousness and supports the formation of thinking processes. Although thinking and language are strongly interconnected, they perform different functions: thinking reflects reality and organizes knowledge, while language serves as the medium through which ideas are expressed and transmitted to others. For this reason, the study of speech and communication occupies an important place in linguistics, psychology, and pedagogy.

One of the significant theoretical perspectives that explains how language functions in communication is the concept of speech acts. Speech acts refer to the actions that individuals perform through language during interaction. When people speak, they do not only produce words but also perform communicative functions such as informing, requesting, persuading, explaining, or expressing emotions. These actions demonstrate that language is not merely a system of grammatical structures but also a dynamic tool used in social contexts. Understanding the theoretical foundations of speech acts helps explain how meaning is created, interpreted, and transmitted between speakers in different communicative situations.

The development of speech begins during early childhood and continues gradually as children interact with their environment. Family members, teachers, and peers play an important role in shaping children's communication skills. Through daily conversations, educational activities, and play-based interactions, children expand their vocabulary, learn grammatical structures, and develop the ability to

express ideas more clearly. Preschool education is particularly important in this process because it provides structured opportunities for children to practice language use, engage in storytelling, listen to others, and participate in social communication.

During the preschool period, children's speech becomes more complex and organized. They begin to form longer sentences, use different parts of speech, and understand the relationships between words and meanings. At the same time, the development of fluent speech becomes closely linked with the growth of logical thinking and cognitive abilities. When children learn to describe events, narrate stories, and express their opinions, they also improve their capacity to analyze information and structure their thoughts.

The study of speech development and speech act theory is important for improving educational methods and communication practices. By understanding how speech abilities evolve and how language functions in interaction, educators and researchers can develop more effective strategies for supporting language acquisition and communicative competence. Such knowledge is also valuable in professional fields where communication skills and speech techniques play a key role in successful interaction.

Literature Review. The study of speech and language development has been a central focus in both linguistics and developmental psychology, highlighting the intricate connection between thought and verbal expression. Researchers consistently emphasize that language and thinking are interdependent, yet distinct phenomena. While thinking organizes and interprets objective reality, language serves as the medium through which these thoughts are expressed and shared. According to Vygotsky 1978, language plays a fundamental role in the formation of consciousness, serving as both a tool for social interaction and a mechanism for internal reflection. This view underscores the importance of examining how speech emerges and develops in early childhood, as well as its influence on cognitive and social abilities.

A child's early experiences with adults significantly shape the development of self-perception and communicative competence. Positive adult interactions are associated with healthy personal growth, whereas limited emotionally supportive engagement can lead to challenges in self-awareness and expression Bruner, 1983. Preschool education has been recognized as a critical environment for fostering language acquisition and communicative skills. Beyond formal lessons, daily routines and play-based activities provide natural opportunities for children to practice speech, expand vocabulary, and develop narrative and descriptive abilities Piaget, 1962.

Developmental studies indicate that by ages four to five, children acquire the ability to construct longer, more complex sentences, use parts of speech such as nouns, verbs, and adjectives, and begin mastering grammatical categories of tense, number, and person Brown, 1973. However, researchers note that newly acquired vocabulary and grammatical structures are not always immediately consolidated, and children may struggle with proper sentence formation, tense usage, and word connections in extended speech. This emphasizes the need for repeated practice and guided support in early education settings.

Fluent speech is a key marker of cognitive and social development, reflecting logical thinking, coherent reasoning, and the capacity to communicate ideas effectively Hockett, 1960. Studies suggest that

the development of monologic and narrative skills is strongly influenced by joint verbal activities between adults and children, such as storytelling, guided discussions, and interactive play. These interactions facilitate not only language development but also the ability to structure thoughts and engage in reflective reasoning Bruner, 1996.

Research Methodology. This study adopts a qualitative and observational approach to examine the theoretical foundations and developmental aspects of speech acts in early childhood. The research focuses on understanding how language acquisition, speech development, and cognitive growth interact within preschool-aged children. By combining insights from developmental psychology, linguistics, and educational theory, the study investigates both the processes and practical strategies that influence speech development.

The study targets children between the ages of four and five, a critical period for vocabulary expansion, sentence construction, and the acquisition of basic grammatical structures. Observations also consider the role of adults teachers and caregivers in guiding language development through structured activities, storytelling, and play-based learning.

Results and Discussion. Language develops consciousness while remaining closely connected to thinking. This relationship is evident not only in deeper psychological processes, but also in social interactions. It is widely recognized that words can influence people and shape their behavior. While language and thinking cannot exist independently of each other, they are not identical phenomena. Thinking reflects objective reality, while language serves as a means of expression, allowing ideas to be communicated and preserved. Words and concepts interact with each other dynamically and mutually dependently.

A child's sense of self in early childhood is largely shaped by the attitudes and reactions of the adults around them. Having a positive attitude toward oneself is considered an important foundation for healthy personal development. In contrast, negative self-perception may arise when a child experiences limited emotionally supportive communication with adults during the early stages of life.

In preschool education, introducing children to their surroundings and supporting the development of their speech plays a significant role in the educational process. These activities are not limited to formal lessons.¹ They also occur during children's daily routines, work-related activities, and especially during play. Communication and interaction during play strengthen language abilities and cognitive development.

By the age of four or five, a child's active vocabulary grows significantly, as does their social circle. At this stage, children begin using extended sentences instead of short expressions.² Of the different parts of speech, nouns are typically learned first. Children also start to use grammatical categories related to time, number, and person. They gradually learn to construct simple and complex sentences.

¹ NAEYC. (2020). *Developmentally Appropriate Practice*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

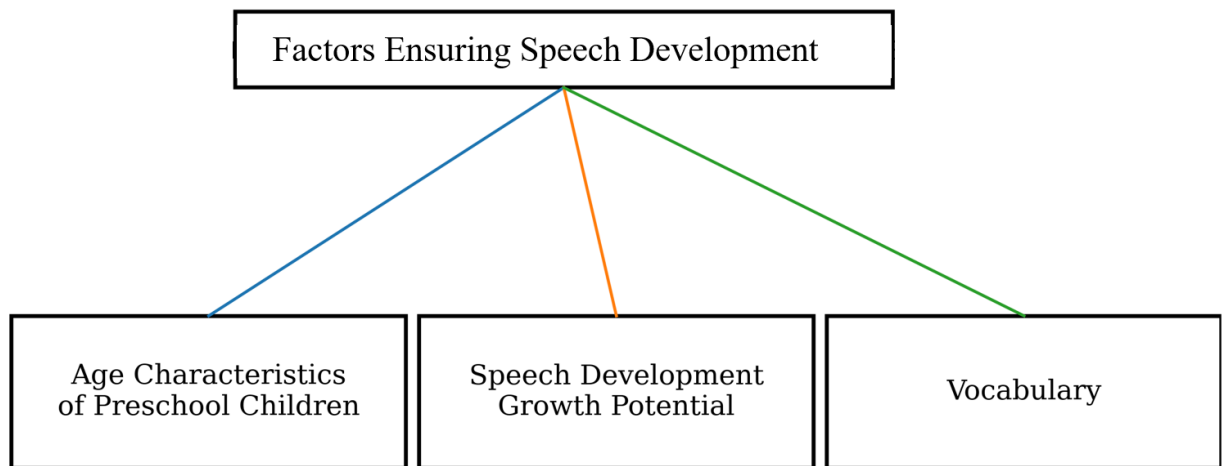
² Clark, E.V. (2009). *First Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Around age four, children begin to use conjunctions in their speech. They learn to use nouns correctly in singular and plural forms, affirmative and negative structures, and different grammatical cases. After learning nouns, children actively acquire verbs and adjectives. However, newly learned words are not always remembered in their correct grammatical form. When using longer sentences, children may have difficulty ensuring that the meaning and structure are correct. They also have difficulty quickly mastering changes in verb tenses, such as the present, past, and future, and may mix up tense endings while speaking.

Sometimes, the words within a child's speech may not be properly connected, and certain parts of speech may be omitted. In the middle preschool group, children's interest in literature is encouraged and developed. Teachers read books to them, tell stories, and guide them in observing and understanding book illustrations. Through these activities, children learn to interpret what they see and hear more accurately.

The teacher helps children understand stories and evaluate characters' actions. At the same time, they are encouraged to appreciate the beauty and expressiveness of literary language. Children are also taught to memorize and recite short poems expressively.

Developing speech skills at this age requires repeated practice. Correct pronunciation, use of specific grammatical forms, creation of descriptive stories based on pictures, and memorization of poems all require repetition. ³However, each repetition should be presented in a way that keeps children interested and engaged.



1-figure. Core Factors Influencing Speech Development in Preschool Children

During speech development activities, children are given opportunities to speak while listening to the teacher's explanations and their peers' responses. Nevertheless, four-year-olds' ability to tell a story on a particular topic or listen attentively to others speech is still developing. Therefore, teachers must consider these developmental characteristics when planning and conducting lessons.

Fluent speech is a meaningful and expanded form of expression that enables effective communication and understanding. Fluent speech is inseparable from the world of thought because it reflects the flow of thinking itself. Through fluent speech, a child demonstrates their ability to think

³ Bodrova, E., & Leong, D.J. (2007). *Tools of the Mind: The Vygotskian Approach to Early Childhood Education*. Pearson.

logically, reflect on what they perceive, and clearly and correctly express their ideas. The development of fluent speech and the gradual expansion of its functions result from the child's increasingly complex activities. This process is closely connected to the conditions and forms of communication that the child experiences with others. During the preschool years, fluent speech develops primarily through interaction and educational activities.

The formation of coherent speech begins in early childhood and develops gradually. During the first seven years of life, special attention should be given to the development of speech as a primary means of communicating with those around the child. Fluent speech plays a significant role in everyone's life and performs three main functions: interpersonal communication, internal individual reflection, and a broader, universal, or social function.

The joint verbal creativity between adults and children is considered one of the key conditions for developing monologic speech. By age five, children typically begin to show interest in retelling familiar fairy tales, describing events they have heard or read about, and sharing experiences from their own lives. Adults should encourage this initiative by asking guiding or clarifying questions and creating playful communication situations. Teachers should gently suggest the content of the story, outline its possible structure, and hint at potential developments in the plot or appropriate word forms. This kind of support plays an important role in collaborative storytelling.

Depending on the method used to convey information, three forms of expression can be identified: description, narration, and reasoning. In preschoolers' speech, these forms often appear mixed or combined. For instance, a narrative may contain descriptive or reflective elements, and narration may sometimes merge with descriptive explanations.

A fundamental characteristic of a word as a linguistic unit is its meaning. A person's understanding of words' different meanings develops gradually over many years. To promote semantic accuracy, educators should introduce children to the various meanings a word can have in different contexts. Teaching children to use words and phrases appropriately in different situations supports the development of coherent thinking. This allows them to use vocabulary more freely, connect ideas according to meaning, and choose suitable linguistic forms to express their thoughts effectively.⁴

⁴ Crystal, D. (2003). *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*. Cambridge University Press.

Speech acts classify sentences (affirmative, imperative, promising, expressive of emotion, declarative).

Analyzing how context, speaker intent, and listener perception shape meaning and impact.

Speech activity studies the social and cultural functions of speech acts in broader communicative practices.

2-figure. Speech Movement Theory

Speech is an individual phenomenon that represents the process of using language in a specific situation for a particular purpose. It is always influenced by context, time, place, and the speaker's personal characteristics. Even when two people share the same language and are discussing the same topic, their speech can differ significantly. One person may express ideas in a scientific or formal manner, while another may use a simple, conversational style.

Speech is one of the most essential tools through which individuals engage in social activities. Through speech, people exchange ideas, emotions, and knowledge. Therefore, speech should not only be considered a linguistic category, but also a social and psychological process. For professionals in any field, a high level of speech culture increases communication effectiveness and improves mutual understanding.

Speech technique also plays an important role. Speech technique involves the skills of shaping, controlling, and presenting speech in a logical and aesthetically appropriate manner.⁵It includes the ability to organize thoughts clearly, deliver them effectively, and maintain clarity and expressiveness in communication.

Speech technique is especially crucial in professions where verbal communication is paramount, including teaching, public speaking, journalism, law, psychology, and broadcasting. For specialists in these fields, speech technique provides a practical foundation for professional verbal performance and effective audience interaction.

⁵ Lucas, S.E. (2015). *The Art of Public Speaking*. McGraw-Hill Education.

Conclusion. The study of speech acts and the development of language in early childhood highlights the intricate connection between thought, communication, and social interaction. Language is not merely a tool for conveying information; it reflects cognitive processes, shapes personal identity, and facilitates interpersonal relationships. From an early age, children’s speech develops through continuous interaction with their environment, guided by the support of adults and educators. Positive and emotionally supportive communication during this formative period significantly influences the development of self-perception, logical thinking, and expressive abilities.

Preschool years are critical for expanding vocabulary, mastering grammatical structures, and forming coherent and fluent speech. Children gradually acquire the ability to construct simple and complex sentences, apply parts of speech accurately, and convey ideas effectively through description, narration, and reasoning. The development of speech is enhanced by activities such as storytelling, play-based learning, and collaborative verbal creativity with adults. Repetition, guidance, and the encouragement of expressive language are essential for strengthening speech skills and fostering cognitive growth.

Furthermore, speech is a social and psychological tool, enabling individuals to communicate, share knowledge, and participate in social life. Mastery of speech technique, including clarity, logical organization, and expressive delivery, is especially important for professional contexts where effective verbal communication is required. In conclusion, supporting speech development in early childhood lays the foundation for lifelong cognitive, social, and communicative competence, making language a vital instrument for personal and societal growth.

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