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Teaching Speaking to a Primary Pupils at Lessons of English Through Building  
Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Skills

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## TEACHING SPEAKING TO A PRIMARY PUPILS AT LESSONS OF ENGLISH THROUGH BUILDING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL) SKILLS

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**Abstract.** Teaching speaking to primary pupils at lessons of English is a vital part of teaching a foreign language. Productive communication even at the beginning level includes attentive listening and correct responding, clear self-expression, the ability to use a body language in an effective way as well as main language competences. By practicing communicative skills, young learners gain a wide range of social skills which are an integral part of giving information and asking for details, agreeing and disagreeing, expressing their opinion and describing their surrounding.

The purpose of the article is to analyze foreign strategies in the frame of teaching English to primary pupils using SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) methodology that gives an opportunity to improve primary pupils' academic successes, test scores, makes it easier for young learners to develop their emotional intelligence, self and social awareness, develop their skills to create safe and effective learning surrounding and enhance their leadership position. The core principles of SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) present the practical strategies of teaching speaking as a part of verbal communication at the lessons of English at primary school through building SEL skills. The author analyzes foreign experience about the influence of emotional exercises on the enhancing primary pupils participation in speaking activities, promoting positive young pupils development through emotional learning, emotional and behavioral programs and effectiveness of education based on SEL in the scientific works of J.A. Durlak, M. Sklad, M.D. Ritter, J. Ben, C. Gravesteyn, J.E. Zins, M.J. Elias.

The author defines five key-factors (safe and supportive learning environment, self-awareness, social-awareness, decision-making and relationship skills) which are an integral part of SEL implementations in the process of teaching speaking primary pupils, describes a variety of approaches, key elements and strategies which influence young learners' communicative skills, eagerness to be actively involved in cooperative learning. The author points out the fact that obtaining emotional impact at lessons of English is especially important for primary pupils whose main activity is gaming. The author describes in the article various strategies (building a family tree, feelings identical cards, art projects, portfolios, role-playing, mindfulness activities, storytelling) to be integrated in the process of teaching speaking to primary pupils aimed at improving their communicative skills.

**Key words:** social and emotional learning; self-awareness; social-awareness; relationship skills; decision making; speaking skills; learning environment; primary pupils.

**Statement of the problem in general.** Effective communication is a fundamental skill that every individual must possess to thrive in society. It is especially important for young children to develop excellent speaking skills because it will enable

them to express their thoughts, ideas and feelings to their peers, family, and the broader community. As such, educators must find effective ways to teach primary pupils speaking skills that will enable them to communicate effectively. One approach that has gained popularity in recent years is Social and Emotional Learning (SEL).

Building SEL skills is a process that teaches primary pupils how to identify and manage their emotions, develop positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. It is a way of teaching the skills young learners need to manage themselves and relate to others positively. SEL involves five core competencies that include self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

**Analyzing the latest research and publications.** The largest and most well-known research about how social emotional learning influences academic learning was done by J.A. Durlak (2011). The results of his scientific research have indicated that social and emotional learning programs have demonstrated significant positive effects on targeted social-emotional competencies, attitudes toward self and others, behavioral adjustment, and academic performance, openness, and readiness for communication.

The later research by J.A. Durlak (2017) found that pupils who participated in SEL programs had long-term benefits such as improved attitudes and behaviours, better academic performance, including higher grades and test scores, and increased rates of graduation and college attendance. Additionally, these students improved attitudes and behaviours, such as increased prosocial behaviour and reduced conduct problems. Furthermore, the study found that SEL programs could reduce the risk of mental health problems among students, such as anxiety and depression.

Continuing exploring effectiveness of school-based universal social, emotional, and behavioral programs M. Sklad, R. Diekstra, M. D. Ritter, J. Ben, & C. Gravesteyn (2012) underlined the fact of positive changes in enhancing pupils' social and emotional outcomes, as well as their academic performance. The study by M. Sklad found that schools that implemented SEL programs had a better school climate, characterized by positive relationships, trust, and respect among students, teachers, and staff. Additionally, these schools had lower rates of bullying and aggression, and fewer conduct problems among students.

M. J. Elias & J. E. Zins (2016) looked at the issue of acquiring SEL skills as a coordinated and systematic approach to promote the value of moving beyond an intro personal focus on traditional academic instructions. The scientists regarded SEL training more broadly and highlighted that it is not a single program or teaching method, but rather an overarching framework or philosophy that involves both teaching and learning strategies and policies and practices for creating and maintaining a school

culture that fosters positive relationships and personal development for all students.

Exploring long-term effects of SEL on students from primary school to high school involved in SEL programs, M. T. Greenberg, R. P. Weissberg, M. U. O'Brien, J. E. Zins, L. Fredericks, H. Resnik, & M. J. Elias, (2017) proved that coordinated, comprehensive, and sustained SEL programming in schools can promote academic success and help young and senior pupils develop the personal and social assets needed to navigate challenges and lead healthy, productive lives.

**The aim of the research** is to underline the effectiveness of implementing SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) strategies into the process of teaching primary pupils speaking skills as the means of enhancing their communicative practice.

**The result of the study.** Learning communication in a foreign language is complicated and multi-stepped process which involves not only acquiring language competences such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation, but also a set of personal competences that contribute to developing speaking skills at the first stages of leaning a foreign language.

The results of the research on the strong connection between developing speaking skills and bringing up the individuals who are equipped with strong social skills are based on the scientific works of outstanding scientists in the sphere of SEL implementation in the school practice (R. Taylor, E. Oberle, J.A. Durlak, R.P. Weissberg (2017), M.J. Elias, J.E. Zins (2016), M.T. Greenberg, R.P. O'Brien, J.E. Fredericks (2017)). The researches have shown the importance of creating a safe and supportive learning environment, encouraging self and social awareness, relationship skills, and decision making for forming a stable desire to express personal ideas in a foreign language and developing necessary skills of effective communicators.

The reform of Ukrainian primary and secondary education “The New Ukrainian School” and a new law “About education” (2017) follow these principles and aim at forming a set of soft skills and competences which include social position, cultural background, the system of moral values , innovation, critical and system thinking, creativity, the ability to properly manage emotions, risk assessment, team-work and others important skills in order to educate and bring up a personality ready to compete at the international labour market. Ukrainian modern system of education focuses on realization of theses ambitious tasks and sees successful implementation of SEL into the educational system as one of the most effective ways to achieve the mentioned above aims.

The factors of SEL system which can be focused while learning speaking English at primary school are presenting in the table below.

Safe and supportive learning environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear classroom rules and expectations;</li> <li>• response to pupils' emotional needs;</li> <li>• building confidence and self-esteem;</li> <li>• positive feedback.</li> </ul>
Self-awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-reflection;</li> <li>• asking open-ended questions;</li> <li>• modelling communicative patterns.</li> </ul>
Social awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role-playing;</li> <li>• discussion of different perspectives;</li> <li>• emotional check-ins;</li> <li>• mindfulness activities;</li> <li>• storytelling.</li> </ul>
Relationship skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative projects;</li> <li>• effective communication;</li> <li>• conflict resolution;</li> <li>• positive reinforcement.</li> </ul>
Decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative and critical thinking;</li> <li>• developing skills to make a choice;</li> <li>• problem-solving skills;</li> <li>• setting an example by teachers.</li> </ul>

The first step to teaching primary pupils speaking skills using SEL is to create a safe and supportive learning environment. Young learners need to feel comfortable and secure before they can express themselves. Educators can do this by establishing clear classroom rules and expectations that are easy to understand and follow, show empathy, and be responsive to pupils' emotional needs. These rules should be communicated to the pupils and posted in a visible place in the classroom to help create a safe and predictable environment for pupils.

One of the important issues for creating SEL environment to contribute to developing young learners speaking skills are empathy, positive feedback, sense of belonging, positive language, and emotional response to pupils' needs.

Educators should show empathy towards their pupils while organizing speaking activities in a primary school English class. They should acknowledge their pupils' feelings, thoughts and ideas, and validate them. This helps pupils feel heard and understood, which fosters a sense of safety and support. After completing a speaking task, a teacher of English should provide positive feedback to the pupils to reinforce positive behaviour and progress and recognise the pupils' strengths and celebrate their successes, which helps build confidence and self-esteem.

Creating a sense of belonging for their pupils, teachers can encourage them to participate in classroom activities, offering opportunities to collaborate with their

peers, and fostering a positive classroom culture. Educators should use positive language when communicating with their pupils. This helps create a positive and encouraging learning environment that is conducive to effective communication. To response pupils' emotional needs, teachers should listen to actively, offer support and guidance, and provide opportunities for their pupils to express themselves in a safe and non-judgmental environment.

By creating a safe and supportive environment, educators can help pupils feel comfortable and secure, which is essential for efficient and productive communication. Pupils who feel safe and supported are more likely to express themselves, interact positively with others and achieve academic success.

The second step to teaching primary pupils speaking skills using SEL is to encourage their self-awareness. Children need to understand their emotions and how to manage them to express themselves effectively. Teachers and educators can help young learners develop self-awareness by providing opportunities for self-reflection, asking open-ended questions, and modelling effective communication. When young learners become self-aware, they get better understanding of their strength, unique interests, and, as a result, their self-esteem can be increased. They become more aware of their thoughts and feelings, their emotional identification and regulation skills that leads to the desire to become a participant of a speaking process as children get practical skills in building healthy relationships with others and reducing the risk for co-dependency and negativity.

The teachers can promote self-awareness in a speaking classroom by explicitly teaching lessons on social and emotional skills and attitude. Teachers of English should model self-awareness practice and integrate this competency across all possible stages and tasks of the lesson:

- uniting social and personal identity. Lessons might help primary pupils explore their family's values by asking the family members and building a family tree or a family ladder, exploring the roots of the family or the story if their names, researching the flag or the language of the country or nation they belong to;
- identifying individual emotions. Activities while expanding vocabulary or practicing speaking skills that help children learn how to name their emotions can be done by using feelings identification cards which is a fun and effective way of identifying their feelings with the language they learn;
- recognising personal and cultural values. Activities that teach students teach students about values which they can identify by creating their own value board, writing, making videos, dramatizing or drawing about their values;
- developing pupils' own unique interests. Activities that help primary

pupils identify their unique personal interests, likes, dislikes through creating a growth mindset or using art projects such as collages, posters, portfolios, mask making or laptops.

The third step to teaching primary pupils speaking skills using SEL is to develop social awareness. Children need to understand the emotions and perspectives of others to communicate effectively. Educators can help pupils develop social awareness by teaching them to listen actively, empathise, and show respect for others.

Encouraging social awareness in primary pupils is an essential part of teaching them speaking skills using the method of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). Social awareness involves the ability to understand and respond appropriately to the emotions and perspectives of others. Here are some examples of how educators can encourage social awareness in primary pupils:

- Role-playing. Role-playing activities can help pupils understand the emotions and perspectives of others. Educators can use role-playing activities to help pupils explore different situations and learn how to respond appropriately.

- Discussion of different perspectives. Teachers can encourage pupils to share their opinions and listen actively to others' perspectives. This can help pupils understand that there may be different viewpoints on a particular topic, and they need to consider the emotions and perspectives of others.

- Emotional check-ins. Educators can use emotional check-ins at the beginning of the day or during class to help pupils identify and manage their emotions. This can help pupils develop empathy towards others by understanding that everyone experiences different emotions.

- mindfulness activities. Mindfulness activities can help pupils focus on the present moment and become more aware of their thoughts and emotions. Educators can use mindfulness activities to help pupils develop a better understanding of their emotions and how they can affect their interactions with others.

- Storytelling. Storytelling is an effective way of teaching pupils social awareness by exploring different emotions and perspectives. Teachers can use stories to teach young pupils how to empathize with others and develop a better understanding of different emotions.

The fourth step to teaching primary pupils speaking skills using SEL is to teach relationship skills. Children need to learn how to develop and maintain positive relationships with others to communicate effectively. Educators can help pupils develop relationship skills by teaching them to communicate effectively, resolve conflicts constructively, and work collaboratively. There are different ways of teaching relationship skills to primary pupils:

- Collaborative projects. Collaborative projects can help pupils develop relationship skills by learning to work together to achieve a common goal. Educators can assign group projects to pupils, encouraging them to communicate effectively, resolve conflicts constructively, and work collaboratively.

- Effective communication. Educators can teach pupils how to communicate effectively by modelling effective communication and teaching them how to express themselves clearly and respectfully. Pupils can learn to listen actively, ask open-ended questions, and provide constructive feedback to others.

- Conflict resolution. Conflict is an inevitable part of any relationship, and pupils need to learn how to resolve conflicts constructively. Educators can teach pupils how to resolve conflicts by teaching them to identify the problem, consider different perspectives, and work together to find a mutually acceptable solution.

- Positive reinforcement. Educators can use positive reinforcement to encourage pupils to develop positive relationship skills. By praising pupils for their efforts to communicate effectively, resolve conflicts constructively, and work collaboratively, educators can motivate pupils to continue developing their relationship skills.

By teaching relationship skills, educators can help primary pupils develop effective speaking skills. Pupils who can develop and maintain positive relationships with others will be better equipped to communicate effectively and interact positively with others.

The fifth step to teaching primary pupils speaking skills using SEL is to encourage responsible decision-making. Children need to learn how to make responsible decisions to communicate effectively. Educators can help pupils develop responsible decision-making skills by teaching them to think critically, consider multiple perspectives, and evaluate the consequences of their actions.

Encouraging responsible decision-making is an essential step in teaching primary pupils speaking skills using SEL. Here are some examples of how educators can help pupils develop responsible decision-making skills.

- Making your own choice. Educators can provide opportunities for primary pupils to make decisions in a safe and supportive environment. For example, they can allow pupils to choose their own reading materials or decide on group activities. By allowing pupils to make choices, they will develop decision-making skills and learn to evaluate options.

- Problem solving. Pupils can be taught to identify a problem, brainstorm potential solutions, and evaluate the pros and cons of each option. By learning to think critically and creatively, pupils will be better equipped to make responsible decisions.

Educators can discuss the consequences of decisions with primary pupils, both positive and negative. For example, pupils can be asked to consider the impact of their decisions on themselves and others. By thinking about the consequences of their decisions, pupils will be more likely to make responsible choices.

- Setting an example. Educators can model responsible decision-making for primary pupils by demonstrating good decision-making skills themselves. For example, educators can talk through their decision-making process and explain why they made a particular choice. By observing responsible decision-making in action, pupils will be more likely to develop these skills themselves.

Encouraging responsible decision-making at the speaking lessons involves providing opportunities for decision-making, teaching problem-solving skills, discussing consequences, teaching empathy, and modeling responsible decision-making. By developing responsible decision-making skills, primary pupils will be better equipped to communicate effectively and interact positively with others.

Teaching primary pupils speaking skills using the method of Social and Emotional Learning is an effective way to help children develop communication skills. By creating a safe and supportive environment, encouraging self-awareness, developing social awareness, teaching relationship skills, and encouraging responsible decision-making, educators can help pupils communicate effectively. As children develop these skills, they will be better able to express themselves and interact positively with others, leading to a more successful and fulfilling life.

**The conclusions and the perspectives of further research.** The analysis of foreign experience of teaching young pupils speaking skills using the method of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) can have a significant impact on the development of effective communication at an early stage of learning English. SEL provides a comprehensive approach to learning that goes beyond traditional academic instruction and focuses on developing social and emotional competencies in pupils. By creating a safe and supportive learning environment, encouraging self-awareness, developing social awareness, teaching relationship skills, and encouraging responsible decision-making, educators can help primary pupils develop effective communication skills.

The given research has consistently shown that SEL has numerous benefits for pupils, including improved academic performance, better social and emotional development, and enhanced life skills. Pupils who receive SEL instruction are better equipped to manage their emotions, develop positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and communicate effectively. They are also more likely to experience positive mental health outcomes, including reduced anxiety, depression, and stress.

SEL research and implementation in teaching primary pupils English evolves

and indicates an effective way to help children develop communication skills and promote overall social and emotional well-being. By incorporating SEL into primary education, educators can provide pupils with the tools they need to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally, leading to a more fulfilling and successful life, enhancing leadership such as authenticity, empathy and the skills to emotional self-management.

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### НАВЧАННЯ КОМУНІКАЦІЇ УЧНІВ ПОЧАТКОВИХ КЛАСІВ НА УРОКАХ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ ЧЕРЕЗ ФОРМУВАННЯ НАВИЧОК SEL (СОЦІАЛЬНЕ ТА ЕМОЦІЙНЕ НАВЧАННЯ)

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**Анотація.** Навчання розмовної мови учнів початкових класів на уроках англійської мови є важливою частиною навчання іноземної мови. Продуктивне спілкування навіть на початковому рівні включає уважне слухання та правильну відповідь, чітке самовираження, здатність ефективно використовувати мову тіла, а також основні мовні компетенції. Практикуючи комунікативні навички, молоді учні отримують широкий спектр соціальних

навичок, які є невід'ємною частиною надання інформації та запитів про деталі, погоджуються та не погоджуються, висловлюють свою думку та описують навколишнє.

Метою статті є аналіз зарубіжних стратегій у рамках навчання англійської мови учнів початкових класів за допомогою методології SEL (Social and Emotional Learning), яка дає можливість покращити академічну успішність учнів початкових класів, тестові результати, полегшує молодшим учням навчання, допомагає розвивати свій емоційний інтелект, самосвідомість та соціальну свідомість, формувати навички створення безпечного та ефективного навчального середовища та підвищувати свою лідерську позицію.

Автор визначає п'ять ключових факторів (безпечне та сприятливе навчальне середовище, самосвідомість, соціальна обізнаність, навички прийняття рішень і взаємовідносин), які є невід'ємною частиною реалізації СЕН у процесі навчання учнів початкової школи розмовної мови, описує різноманітні підходи, ключові елементи та стратегії, які впливають на комунікативні навички молодих учнів, бажання брати активну участь у кооперативному навчанні. Автор зазначає, що отримання емоційного впливу на уроках англійської мови є особливо важливим для учнів початкових класів, основним видом діяльності яких є ігрова діяльність. У статті автор описує різноманітні стратегії (побудова генеалогічного дерева, ідентичні картки почуттів, мистецькі проекти, портфоліо, рольові ігри, уважність, розповідь), які слід інтегрувати в процес навчання говоріння учнів початкових класів, спрямованих на вдосконалення їхніх комунікативних навичок.

**Ключові слова:** соціально-емоційне навчання; самосвідомість; соціальна свідомість; навички стосунків; прийняття рішень; мовленнєві навички; навчальне середовище; учні початкових класів.

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