

STRESZCZENIE PO ANGIELSKU

This PhD dissertation features a name-based method (*Metoda Odimienna*) developed by Irena Majchrzak. The main objective of the dissertation is to assess the effectiveness demonstrated for reading competence in young pupils when taught a foreign language. The research question asks about modifications introduced to the elements of this name-based method, and whether they help children develop their reading potential in English. Originally adopted in Polish kindergartens, the method was introduced in a non-public bilingual primary school. Though intended to teach reading in the mother tongue, this method has been redesigned for conducting a case study aimed to develop early reading skills in a foreign language. A review of didactic systems and the currently used methods for teaching reading are taken as a background for the constructivist approach related to the child's internal motivation and cognitive activities. The dissertation deals with individualization in teaching and learning, as well as the integration of educational content in early childhood education.

Chapter One discusses the assumptions of progressivism and the concepts that arose in opposition to the existing traditional schools of Pestalozzi and Herbart. Next, the child's psycholinguistic development is characterized by outlining the stages of speech development. Other issues include the theory of language acquisition and learning and distinguishing between the native language and the second or foreign language. The elements inherent to the acquisition of a first language are discussed as a pivotal part of the subject.

Chapter Two concentrates on individualization which can be achieved in practice through the use of the constructivist model of teaching. This part presents the modern approach which postulates that a special attention be devoted to the potential and the needs of individual learners. Conversations with parents, opinions provided by specialists and observations help teachers adjust their work and teaching methods to enable every child to succeed in learning.

Chapter Three focuses on the cognitive aspects of the reading process, offers a description of teaching methods used by preschool and early childhood education teachers and lists the advantages of bilingualism. The chapter highlights the main objective of learning how to read, i.e. how to become independent in this activity. Reading plays a role in awakening interests, expanding knowledge and developing language. This process can be facilitated by adopting an appropriate teaching method, or combining a number of available methods. A well-developed

ability to read in a mother tongue later has a positive effect on the same competence in a foreign language.

Chapter Four outlines the name-based method developed by Irena Majchrzak who planned to teach reading to Mexican pupils. The method has been already popular among preschool teachers in Poland who successfully introduce its elements with groups of three-year-old children. In the other part, the chapter postulates the extension of well-known methods aimed at learning foreign languages in the first grade of primary school with elements of the name-based method.

Chapter Five opens the empirical part of the dissertation and presents the context of the conducted study with a detailed description of the research procedure. Both the key questions and the goals allow for the formulation of specific conclusions and recommendations. The study included twenty pupils – five children aged six and fifteen children aged seven. Four of them could read fluently in Polish and a group of fourteen children were able to read every text more or less fluently (dividing difficult words letter by letter or using syllables). Two children had not learnt to read at an earlier stage of education. All the pupils in the non-public bilingual institution participated in five English classes per week. Additionally, fourteen of them gained additional knowledge during extracurricular classes (the reading club in English). The tests were carried out every day in fifteen-minute cycles. The first stage of the method is the “Initiation”, in which the teacher writes the child’s name on a piece of paper. Working with Majchrzak’s method I used only English names instead of Polish ones. During the next phase (“The wall full of letters”) children observed all the characters of the alphabet and discussed each character separately and in detail. The third stage – the “Letter Market” – consists of collecting all available characters of the alphabet. At the beginning of this stage, pupils realized that they had a limited number of letters in their names, which could ultimately be a basis for creating a limited number of new words. The last stage related to several games is called “Naming the world”. Thanks to it, the phase of global reading began.

Chapter Six presents the interpretation of the results from the study. It begins with an analysis of the research method and its modifications. In the next part, there is a detailed discussion and commentary on the subsequent elements of Irena Majchrzak’s method used to teach reading in English, its weaknesses and strengths. This chapter also focuses on the possibilities of integrating the content in early childhood education through the use of appropriate methods and through a teacher who combines pedagogical and specialist knowledge. This chapter is also a critical discussion of Majchrzak’s publications.

The name-based method is a useful tool for working with young learners, which may be used to develop reading competencies in both their native or foreign languages. The conducted research and the use of the name-based method in a different way than previously commonly known presents the universality of the method, its flexibility and limitations. It constitutes the basis for further research, while Majchrzak's books containing the description of the method can be a starting point for all teaching activities.