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METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS REGARDING DEVELOPMENT OF DIALOGIC COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE IN PRIMARY EDUCATION STUDENTS

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This article addresses the issue of developing dialogic communication competence among primary school students. It elucidates the methodological approach to enhancing this competence, which can be more effective if teachers properly organize activities for practicing dialogue. Dialog skills will not be developed in primary school students merely through simple reproduction exercises; instead, careful analysis of communication situations and their use in varied and authentic contexts is required. The article presents the analysis and interpretation of the results of an administered questionnaire, from which it is inferred that, in order to overcome the difficulties encountered by primary school students in developing dialogic communication competence, teachers should design debate activities, text-based discussions, dramatizations of literary texts adapted to age-specific characteristics, and employ specific methods such as guided dialogue, role-play, debate, problem-based learning, and heuristic conversation.

Keywords: *oral communication, dialogic communication, dialogic communication competence, didactic activities, didactic forms, methods.*

ASPECTE METODOLOGICE PRIVIND DEZVOLTAREA COMPETENȚEI DE COMUNICARE DIALOGATĂ LA ELEVII DIN ÎNVĂȚĂMÂNTUL PRIMAR

În acest articol este abordată problema dezvoltării competenței de comunicare dialogată la elevii din învățământul primar. Este elucidat demersul metodologic de dezvoltare a acestei competențe, care poate fi mai eficientă, dacă cadrele didactice organizează corect activități de exersare a dialogului. Abilitățile de dialog nu vor fi dezvoltate la elevii din învățământul primar doar prin simple exerciții de reproducere, ci este necesară o analiză atentă a situațiilor de comunicare și valorificarea lor în contexte variate și autentice. Articolul prezintă analiza și interpretarea rezultatelor unui chestionar aplicat, din care deducem că, pentru a elimina dificultățile întâmpinate de elevii claselor primare în dezvoltarea competenței de comunicare dialogată, cadrele didactice trebuie să proiecteze activități de dezbatere, activități de discuție pe text, activități de dramatizare a textelor literare adaptate particularităților de vârstă și să utilizeze metode specifice: dialogul ghidat, jocul de rol, dezbaterea, problematizarea, conversația euristică etc.

Cuvinte-cheie**:** *comunicare orală, comunicare dialogată, competența de comunicare dialogată, activități didactice, forme didactice, metode.*

Introduction

Oral communication is important in the *Language and Communication* curriculum area, aiming to develop students’ ability to listen actively and to express themselves clearly and coherently. The communication process involves both the ability to send messages and to be a good listener, because “half of the communication process is listening”. Listening and hearing are considered fundamental skills, involving understanding the speaker’s intention and responding appropriately to the messages received. On the other hand, speaking, as a form of interpersonal communication, requires mastery of language at all levels (phonological, grammatical, lexical, syntactic) and the elimination of barriers to expression. Oral communication lessons aim to develop students’ critical thinking, cooperation and communicative attitude, through interactive exercises and dialogue [3, p. 25].

”Communication must occupy a central place in primary education, because it facilitates the development of listening, expression and understanding skills of interlocutors” [7, p. 121].

In the opinion of the author Constantin Cucoș, “effective communication involves not only the correct transmission of messages, but also the ability to actively listen, cooperate and negotiate meanings” [2, p. 37].

“The development of oral communication competence will be built on various teaching approaches: initiation into the ways of listening to a message, depending on the content, forms, communication channels; development of the skill of reacting verbally to a listened message; practicing in different communication situations; formulating and launching messages; integrating vocabulary acquisitions into own statements; specific use of communication situations” [9, p. 10].

Dialogic communication is a form of direct and reciprocal interaction between two or more participants. In an educational context, it plays an essential role in developing the communication and comprehension competences of primary school students. For this reason, it is necessary that the language used in teaching activities be accessible, clear and adapted to the age of children, so that they can understand and respond appropriately.

In the opinion of specialists in Romanian language teaching, dialogic communication cannot be reduced to a simple chain of questions and answers, but represents a complex process of constructing meaning and managing interaction [5, p. 105].

The dialogic communication competence in primary education refers to the ability of children to interact effectively and appropriately through dialogue, both with some colleagues and with teachers, parents or other people in the school environment [11, p. 9]. Dialogic communication in the teaching environment must be built on interaction, involvement and collaboration between students and teachers, so as to stimulate free expression, the development of critical thinking and creativity.

“Dialogue communication can be a valuable tool to encourage students to express their own opinions and be open to the perspectives of others” [4, p. 163].

Dialogic communication is one of the most essential dimensions of the instructional-educational process, especially in primary education, where the development of communication skills contributes decisively to the formation of students’ social, cognitive and emotional competences. In this sense, the main objective of this research was to investigate teachers’ perceptions of the importance of dialogic communication, the strategies used to develop it and the difficulties encountered in daily teaching.

“It contributes significantly to the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills in primary school students” [10, p. 133].

The development of *dialogic communication competence* is a gradual process, which begins in the first grade, takes shape in the second grade and is consolidated in the third and fourth grades. “Dialogue energizes the activity of the entire class, stimulates the active participation of students, increases attention and develops dialogic speech, considered superior to monologue speech” [1, p. 42].

The development of this competence “requires an integrated approach, which includes the development of listening skills, oral expression, manifestation of emotions, interpretation and understanding of messages, as well as adaptation to various communication situations. All of these can be cultivated through interactive and contextualized activities, which allow students to gradually and efficiently develop their communication capacity” [8, p. 34].

The development of dialogic communication competence in primary school students is one of the fundamental skills that contributes decisively to the academic and social success of students. The competence to initiate and sustain an effective dialogue involves the simultaneous development of the capacities of active listening, clear expression, respect for communication rules and adaptation to the interlocutor.

The development of dialogic communication competence in primary school students is one of the fundamental competences ”which ensures the development of students’ ability to interact effectively and appropriately in various communication contexts” [6, p. 45-47].

Dialogue situations are perceived differently by each student, depending on personal experience and the communication context. Therefore, the teacher’s role is to create varied and authentic communication situations, which develop students’ verbal spontaneity and flexibility [5, p. 105].

Concerned with the issue of developing dialogic communication competence in primary school students, in the following we are interested in the difficulties encountered by primary school students in developing dialogic communication competence and what are *the ways of motivating* dialogic communication, *the methods and forms of organization* in streamlining the development of this competence.

Experimental framework

For this purpose, we applied a questionnaire to a sample of 112 teachers with different seniority in primary education, which gives the study a significant representativeness. The research instrument was structured in two main sections:

1) Perceptions on dialogic communication;

2) Strategies used to develop dialogic communication competence. The answers provided allow not only to quantify the general opinion on this subject, but also to extract relevant conclusions regarding good practices, challenges and development directions in the field of communicative education.

Analyzing the results recorded by primary education teachers, we find that for **Item 1,** *“How important do you consider dialogic communication in the educational process at the primary education level?”* 98.2% of respondents consider it to be “very important” and 1.8% indicated that it is “important”. The values reveal an almost total consensus on the crucial role of dialogic communication in the educational process. This assessment indicates that the majority of teachers recognize the potential of dialogue not only as a teaching tool, but also as a means of personal and social development of students. Given that only 1.8% do not consider it “very important”, we can speak of an educational climate in which dialogic communication is seen as a basic competence. This fact suggests the opportunity for the systematic integration of communicative strategies in all curricular areas.

To the question: *“To what extent do you think that students can support a structured and coherent dialogue at their age?”*: 26.8% of those interviewed answered – to a large extent, 68.8% – to a certain extent and 4.5% – to a small extent. The answers indicate a moderate level of confidence in students’ dialogic communication competences. Although a third of teachers believe that students can support a structured dialogue to a large extent, the majority express reservations, placing themselves in the “to a certain extent” area. This may signal a need for systematic intervention to develop oral expression competences, as well as the need for support through structured learning contexts (e.g. role-playing games, debates).

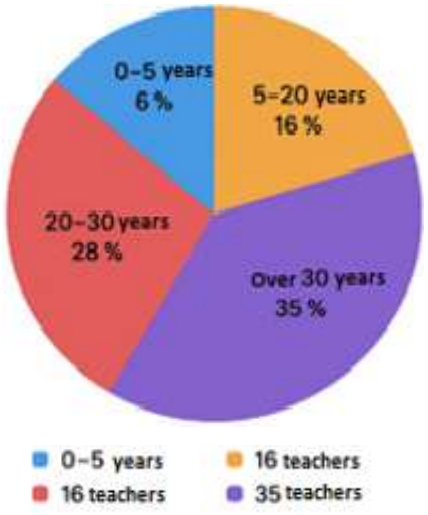


Fig. 1. Distribution of Interviewed Teachers by Length of Service in Education Groups

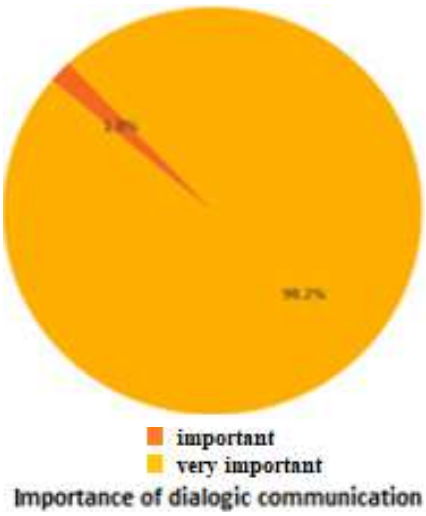


Fig. 2. Representation of Dialogic Communication Importance

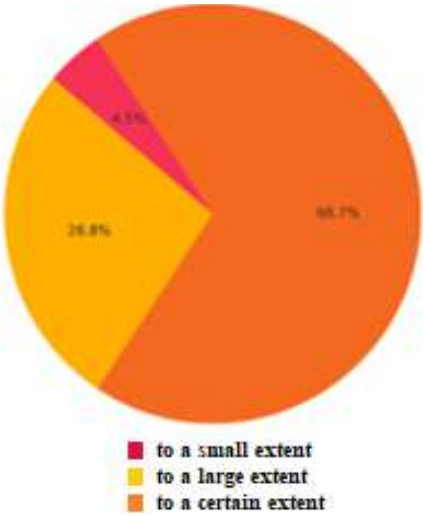


Fig. 3. Students’ Ability to Sustain Coherent Dialogue

Analyzing the results recorded in **Item 3** regarding *ways to motivate students to communicate*, teachers predominantly use dialogue themes and specific teaching strategies to stimulate communication.

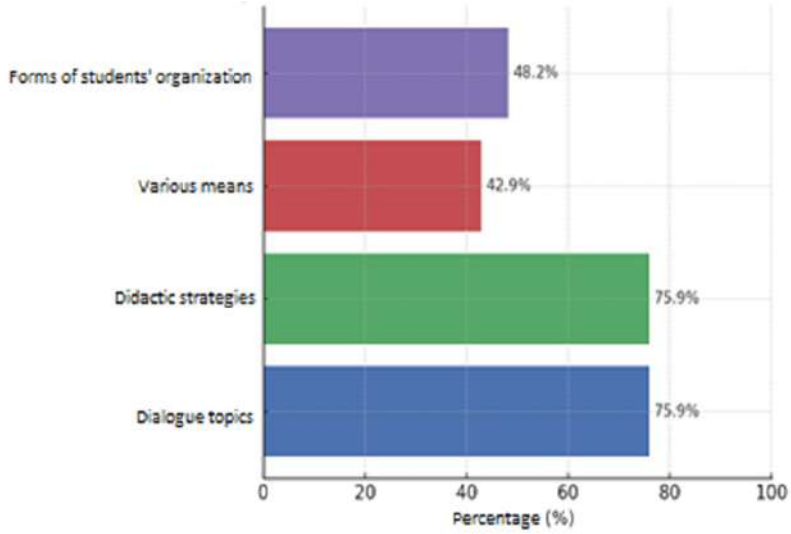


Fig. 4. Ways to Motivate Students for Communication

- By proposing various dialogue topics - 75.9%
- By using various teaching strategies - 75.9%
- By using various means - 42.9%
- By using various forms of student organization - 48.2%

The relatively lower importance given to various means and collective organization indicates a pedagogical orientation that is more traditional than technological or collaborative.

It can be recommended to increase the share of interactive approaches (technologies, digital collaboration), in order to increase the attractiveness of dialogic activities.

Referring to **Item 4** regarding *strategies/methods for developing dialogic communication competence*, the increased use of role-playing games, followed by guided conversations, is noted, which underlines the preference for interactive methods. Collective storytelling, although relevant, is used in a lower percentage, which may indicate a decrease in the role of classical narrative in favor of active strategies.

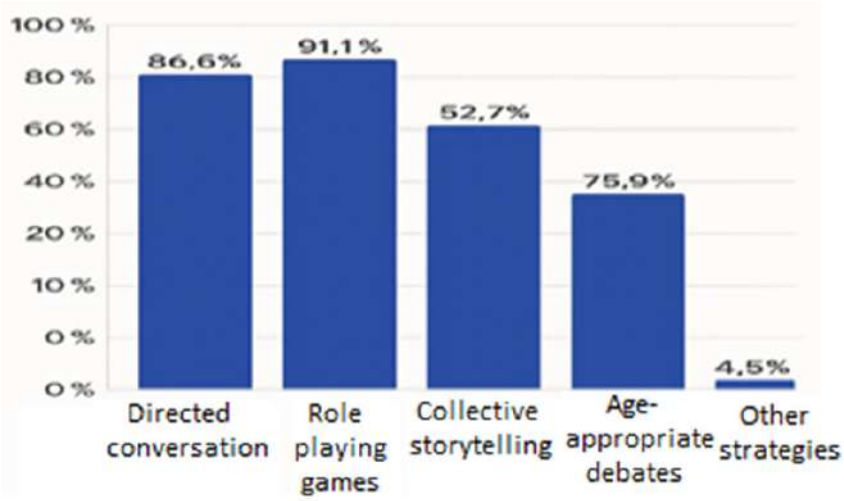


Fig. 5. Didactic Strategies Used to Develop Communication

Referring to **Item 5**, *"How effective do you consider these strategies in developing dialogic communication in primary school students?"* the general perception is positive, most teachers perceive the applied strategies as having a strong impact on the development of communication competence (77.7% very effective, 22.3% effective). This assessment can be correlated with the frequency of their use and with the results observed in practice.

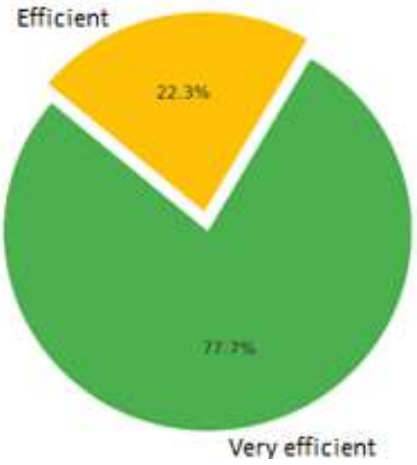


Fig. 6. Efficiency of Strategies Used

On **the 6th item**, *“Which didactic forms of classroom organization do you consider to be most helpful to primary school students in understanding literary texts/composing dialogue?”*, we recorded the following results: group activities (71.4%) are clearly in first place, suggesting that respondents perceive didactic socialization and multiple interaction as the most favorable for the development of dialogic communication competence. Group work offers a diversity of roles, the need to negotiate meanings, and repeated opportunities to exchange responses. Frontal activities (59.8%) are, however, at a high level, indicating that exposure, modeling of conversational rules, and collective discussions guided by the teacher remain essential. The frontal form can function as a “common platform” from which collaborative activities subsequently emerge. The percentage for pair activities (52.7%) shows the appreciation of a format that allows all students to effectively participate; the speaking and listening time is distributed more evenly, and shy students can practice in a less exposed setting. Although the latter is preferred (34.8%), individual work is not negligible. It supports personal preparation (thinking about answers, noting ideas, self-regulation) that subsequently feeds the dialogic exchange. Integrating short individual phases before or after the dialogue can increase the quality of the interaction.

Teachers combine forms of organization. A balanced design could start with frontal modeling, continue with exploration in pairs, extend negotiation in groups and end with evaluative individual reflection, maximizing both participation and internalization of dialogic communication strategies.

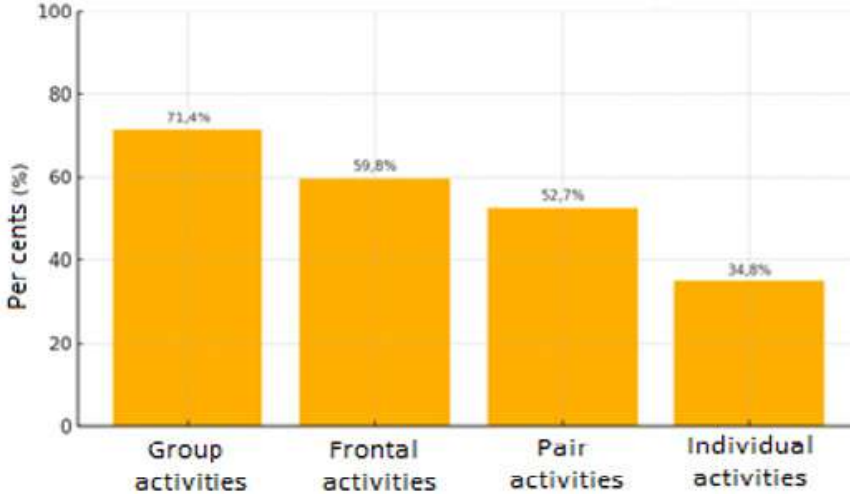


Fig. 7. Preferred Forms of Organization

Analyzing the questionnaire data recorded, at **item 7**, *“What are the difficulties that primary school students encounter in composing a dialogue?”*, the data analysis highlights the fact that the main difficulties encountered by students in composing a dialogue are active listening (54.5%) and adaptation to the communication situation (53.6%), very close values. These aspects show that students encounter problems in maintaining effective communication, especially in terms of understanding the context and responding appropriately to the interlocutor. Also, the opening and closing formulas (51.8%) represent an important barrier, suggesting that students need additional exercises to coherently structure the dialogues. In contrast, logical answers (28.6%) are perceived as a less frequent difficulty, which indicates an acceptable level of logical thinking, but insufficient to compensate for the lack of communicative coherence.

These results reveal the need for teaching methods focused on developing active listening and creating real communication contexts, through which students learn to initiate, maintain and complete a dialogue in a natural and efficient manner.

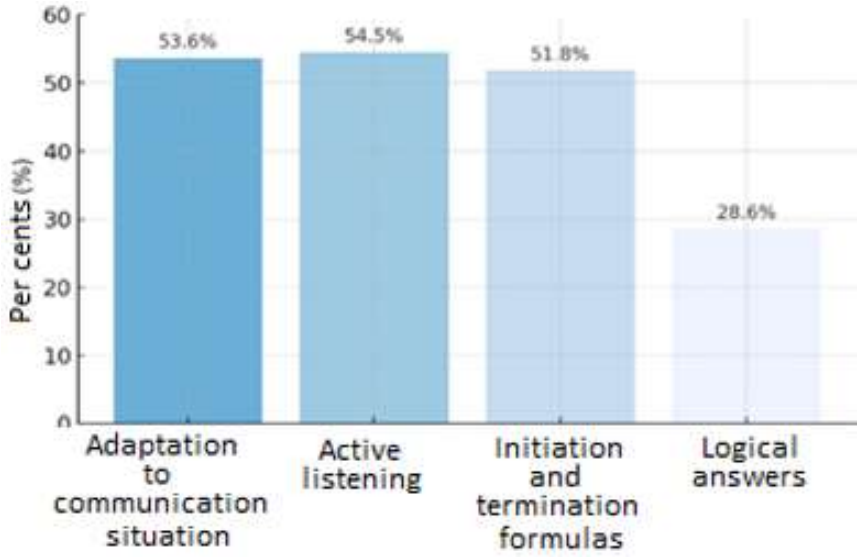


Fig. 8. Difficulties Encountered in Students' Communication

Comparing the results regarding *the forms of organizing activities* for the development of dialogic communication competence and *the difficulties encountered by students in composing a dialogue,* we observe a significant correlation between the types of activities and the identified communication problems.

1. *Group activities (71.4%)* and *pair activities (52.7%)*, preferred by teachers, provide students with an interactive framework conducive to practicing dialogue. However, difficulties such as *active listening (54.5%)* and *adapting to the communication situation (53.6%)* suggest that, although they are applied, they are not sufficiently exploited to develop authentic and coherent communication.

2. *Frontal activities (59.8%),* which involve more dialogue between the teacher and the students, could contribute to the lack of initiative of the students in *formulating the opening and closing formulas (51.8%)*, because these contexts are more rigid and less favorable to personal expression.

3. *Individual activities (34.8%),* although less used, do not allow for real interaction, which may partially explain the persistence of difficulties in *adapting to the communication situation* and in developing *active listening*, essential elements in dialogue.

4. *The low level of problems related to logical answers (28.6%)* shows that students better master the structure of ideas, but need more consistent exercises to understand the dynamics of dialogue and the role of mutual listening.

The results show that there is a need to optimize interactive activities (groups and pairs), through tasks that stimulate authentic dialogue, the exchange of ideas and the management of real communication situations. Also, *explanatory readings and dialogue scenarios* should be complemented with *role-playing* and *debates,* in order to increase the level of adaptation and active listening of students.

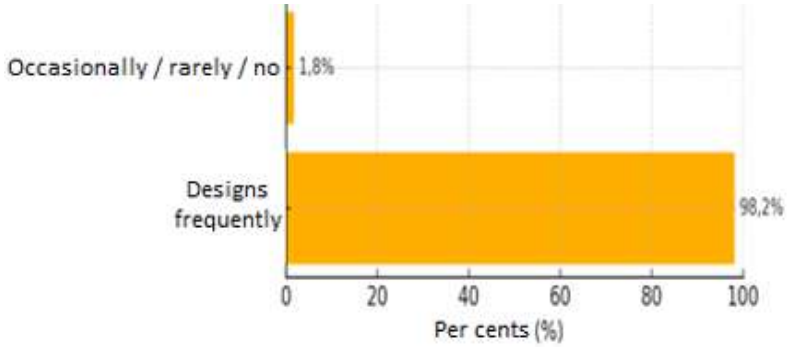


Fig. 9. Frequency of Designing Activities for Developing Dialogic Communication

To the question *"How frequently do you use activities to develop dialogic communication",* the data indicate an almost unanimous consensus: *98.2% of teachers declare that they frequently design activities aimed at developing* dialogic communication competence. Only ~1.8% report a low frequency (occasionally / rarely / not at all). This extremely polarized distribution conveys several important methodological and pedagogical messages.

The very high proportion suggests the alignment of teachers with current curricular guidelines that grant communication (oral, dialogic) status as a key transdisciplinary competence. Declaratively, teachers seem aware that dialogic skills support learning in all curricular areas.

For **the last item** *“Exemplify an activity that you have designed in order to develop dialogic communication competence”,* the responses of *112 teachers* were analyzed.

Results and discussion

The reports allowed multiple mentions; the percentages refer to the proportion of respondents who indicated each type of activity. Therefore, the totals exceed 100%, reflecting the combined use of work forms in didactic design. Mentioned in *over 60%* of the responses (≥68 teachers), role-playing games constitute the dominant strategy. The scenarios *“At the library”, “At the store”, “Interview”, “Toy fair”, “From the teacher”, “The story of the brown bear”* show the orientation *towards recognizable life situations* and *narrative transpositions* that stimulate empathy. Methodologically, teachers use the assignment and rotation of roles, the construction of dialogues and playful supports (models, mascots). Functions: training clear expression, active listening, negotiation of meanings and collaboration.

To develop dialogic communication competence in primary school students, an important role is played by *debate activities* (technology, healthy eating, environmental protection) that are mobilized to develop *critical thinking* and *argumentative expression*. They require compliance with the rules of constructive dialogue (listening, paraphrasing, responding) and introduce contextualized disciplinary vocabulary.

An equally important role in the development of this competence is played by *discussions on the text, character analysis, question/answer formulation* and *literary mini debates* that help to understand dialogic communication texts.

A new series of methods such as *the ATA (Answer-Throw-Ask) method, the Cube method, and the Starburst method* indicate the use of the cooperative framework to distribute conversational roles and multiple perspectives.

In order to improve the development of dialogic communication competence in primary school students, we suggest that teachers organize *dramatization activities of literary texts* or *original creations* with students. It is important to contribute to the expansion of *role-playing* towards ***performativity:*** memorization, vocal projection, nonverbal expressiveness, coherence of chained lines. Dramatization is beneficial for reluctant students, because speaking as a character reduces anxiety. The use of mediator characters lowers the barrier to expression, making dialogic tasks game-centered and accessible to students in grades I and II.

Conclusions

The conducted research has enabled us to formulate the following conclusions: the obtained results highlight that the development of dialogic communication competence in primary school students constitutes an essential component of the educational process, having a significant impact on academic performance and social integration.

The data reveals the existence of a moderate to high potential among students to engage in coherent dialogue. However, the analysis highlights persistent difficulties regarding adaptation to the communicative context, the manifestation of active listening, and the assurance of logical coherence in discourse.

In this context, optimizing the development of dialogic communication competence requires the implementation of interactive, student-centered teaching strategies. Debate activities, grounded in adherence to the rules of constructive dialogue (listening, paraphrasing, response formulation), as well as text interpretation activities (guided discussions, character analysis, dramatization), prove effective in stimulating communicative competences.

Furthermore, expanding role-play toward its performative dimension, by integrating elements such as memorization, vocal projection, non-verbal expressivity, and coherence of turns, contributes to the development of fluency and self-confidence, particularly among students who are hesitant to express themselves, thereby reducing the anxiety associated with communicative situations.

Enhancing the effectiveness of this approach is conditional upon the diversified use of organizational forms of didactic activity and specific methods, such as collective storytelling, guided dialogue, role-play, debate, and heuristic conversation, which foster active participation and the development of functional communicative competences.

In **conclusion**, the research provides relevant theoretical and applicative references for optimizing teaching practices, with a view to developing dialogic communication competence in primary school students, in accordance with the requirements of an educational approach centered on the holistic formation of the student's personality. This analysis offers a coherent framework for rethinking and optimizing teaching strategies focused on the development of dialogic communication competence in primary school students, in the spirit of quality education oriented toward the comprehensive development of the learner.

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