

UDC 373.2.016:811.161.2'243
DOI <https://doi.org/10.24919/2308-4863/95-1-38>

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METHODOLOGY FOR OVERCOMING LINGUISTIC DIFFICULTIES IN THE PROCESS OF TEACHING UKRAINIAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE TO PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN

The article is devoted to the study of a pressing issue in linguodidactics – the development and implementation of a methodology for overcoming phonetic, graphic, and orthographic difficulties in the process of teaching Ukrainian as a foreign language (UFL) to preschool children (4–6 years old). The main topic of the research covers the analysis of specific language barriers that arise in an allophone environment and the search for optimal ways to minimize them through game and interactive technologies. The problem of the research is determined by the need to overcome linguistic interference, which is most clearly manifested at the stage of a child's transition from the initial level of language proficiency (A1) to the basic level (A2). Special attention is paid to the articulation of complex sounds and the assimilation of specific letter combinations that are often absent in the phonological system of the language of the child's country of residence.

The aim of the article is to provide a theoretical substantiation and practical demonstration of the effectiveness of a comprehensive approach to teaching UFL based on the third part of the textbook «My Friends» («Difficulties in Pronunciation and Writing»). The work analyzes the structure of thematic lessons aimed at correcting the pronunciation of affricates [dzh], [dz], the sound [shch], as well as studying jotted phonemes and the rules for using the soft sign and apostrophe. The research methodology is based on the communicative-game approach, which corresponds to the psychophysiological characteristics of preschool children.

The generalized results of the study indicate that the use of multimedia content (songs, poems, video materials) in combination with a clear algorithm of exercises «Listen – Repeat – Find – Say» significantly increases the level of speech competence of preschoolers. Practical testing on the material of the lesson «The Room» demonstrated that the integration of grammatical material into the lexical context promotes the natural assimilation of language norms without excessive cognitive load on the child. The proposed methodology provides the formation of stable articulatory skills and lays the foundation for successful mastery of Ukrainian writing.

Key words: Ukrainian as a foreign language, preschool education, linguistic interference, phonetic difficulties, game learning method, «My Friends» manual, linguodidactics.

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МЕТОДИКА ПОДОЛАННЯ ЛІНГВІСТИЧНИХ ТРУДНОЩЕЙ У ПРОЦЕСІ НАВЧАННЯ УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ МОВИ ЯК ІНОЗЕМНОЇ ДІТЕЙ ДОШКІЛЬНОГО ВІКУ

Стаття присвячена дослідженню актуальної проблеми лінгводидактики – розробці та впровадженню методики подолання фонетичних, графічних та орфографічних труднощів у процесі навчання української мови як іноземної (УМІ) дітей дошкільного віку (4–6 років). Основна тема дослідження охоплює аналіз специфічних мовних бар'єрів, що виникають в інофонному середовищі, та пошук оптимальних шляхів їх мінімізації через ігрові та інтерактивні технології. Проблема дослідження зумовлена необхідністю подолання мовної інтерференції, яка найбільш виразно проявляється на етапі переходу дитини від початкового рівня володіння мовою (A1) до базового (A2). Особлива увага приділяється артикуляції складних звуків та засвоєнню специфічних буквосполучень, що часто відсутні у фонологічній системі мови країни проживання дитини.

Метою статті є теоретичне обґрунтування та практична демонстрація ефективності комплексного підходу до навчання УМІ на прикладі третьої частини навчального посібника «Мої друзі» («Труднощі вимови та писання»). У роботі проаналізовано структуру тематичних уроків, спрямованих на корекцію вимови африкатів

[дж], [дз], звука [ц], а також на вивчення йотованих фонем та правил вживання м'якого знака й апострофа. Методологія дослідження ґрунтується на засадах комунікативно-ігрового підходу, що відповідає психофізіологічним особливостям дітей дошкільного віку.

Узагальнені результати дослідження свідчать, що використання мультимедійного контенту (пісень, віршів, відеоматеріалів) у поєднанні з чітким алгоритмом вправ «Послухай – Повтори – Знайди – Скажи» дозволяє значно підвищити рівень мовленнєвої компетенції дошкільників. Практична апробація на матеріалі уроку «Кімната» продемонструвала, що інтеграція граматичного матеріалу в лексичний контекст сприяє природному засвоєнню мовних норм без надмірного когнітивного навантаження на дитину. Запропонована методика забезпечує формування стійких артикуляційних навичок та закладає підґрунтя для успішного опанування українського письма.

Ключові слова: українська мова як іноземна, дошкільна освіта, мовна інтерференція, фонетичні труднощі, ігровий метод навчання, посібник «Мої друзі», лінгводидактика.

Problem Statement. In the context of globalization and the mass migration of the Ukrainian population abroad, the issue of preserving and developing the Ukrainian language among diaspora children has acquired strategic importance. Teaching Ukrainian as a Foreign Language (UFL) at the preschool level (ages 4–6) is a complex psycho-pedagogical task, as the foundation of linguistic competence is established during this period. The primary challenge lies in significant linguistic difficulties –including phonetic barriers, specific graphics, and orthography – which, in a foreign-language environment, often lead to language interference. Developing an effective methodology that accounts for age-specific characteristics and typical errors made by allophones is a crucial task for modern linguodidactics.

Analysis of Recent Research and Publications. The theoretical and methodological foundations of teaching Ukrainian as a Foreign Language (UFL) have undergone a significant transformation over the past decades. The challenges of developing linguistic competence in allophones have been a central focus for many researchers. Specifically, H. Shvets (Shvets, 2022: 112) devotes considerable attention to the conceptual frameworks for creating UFL textbooks, emphasizing the importance of incorporating the sociocultural context. Issues regarding the methodology of teaching the Ukrainian language specifically within a foreign-language environment, as well as the development of interactive learning models, are actively addressed by O. Turkevych (Turkevych, 2020: 150) and L. Antoniv (Antoniv, 2021: 46), whose works focus on the functional-communicative approach.

A separate body of research is dedicated to the specifics of working with bilingual children and preschoolers. For instance, the works of N. Nazarevych (Nazarevych, 2023: 78) provide a thorough analysis of the aspects of a child's psycholinguistic adaptation to a second linguistic code. Issues of phonetic correction and overcoming articulatory difficulties, which are critically important for our study, are examined in the works of E. Palykhata (Palykhata, 2018: 47) and L. Palamar (Palamar, 2015: 15). Researcher

O. Stepanenko (Stepanenko, 2024: 104) emphasizes game-based technologies as a dominant means of intensifying language learning for preschool-aged children.

Despite a significant number of existing studies, the problem of specific methodological steps for overcoming phonetic and graphic interference in children aged 4–6 (particularly the acquisition of affricates and complex spelling cases through play) remains open for practical modeling.

Identification of Previously Unresolved Parts of the General Problem. Although the general principles of the UFL methodology for children have been described extensively, the step-by-step algorithm for overcoming specific difficulties remains insufficiently addressed. This includes the differentiation of affricates ([dʒ] (дж), [dʒ] (дз)), the correct articulation of the vowel [y] (и), the acquisition of iotated vowels, and the use of the soft sign (m'yakyiznak) and the apostrophe within a playful context. There is a pressing need to describe a holistic system where phonetics, graphics, and vocabulary are integrated into a single communicative space, adapted to the needs of a modern allophone child.

The Purpose of the Article is to substantiate the methodology for overcoming phonetic, graphic, and orthographic difficulties in preschool children (ages 4–6) during the process of learning Ukrainian as a Foreign Language, based on the material from the textbook «My Friends» (Moi Druzi), Part 3. Achieving this goal involves analyzing the thematic content of the manual, describing methodological strategies for working with complex sound combinations, and demonstrating practical exercises aimed at developing high-quality speech skills.

Presentation of the Main Material. The practical implementation of the proposed methodology for overcoming linguistic difficulties is illustrated through the example of Lesson 6, «The Room» (*Kimnata*), from the textbook «My Friends» (Moi Druzi) (Part 3). The central methodological task at this stage is the correction of pronunciation and spelling of words containing the affricates [dʒ] (дж) and [dʒ] (дз)

(дз). These traditionally pose challenges for allophone children due to the absence of analogous monophonic combinations in many of the languages of their countries of residence (for instance, the tendency to pronounce the sounds [d] (д) and [zh] (ж) or [d] (д) and [z] (з) separately).

The teaching methodology for preschoolers within this lesson is based on a comprehensive integration of the four language skills, adapted to the A1 level. This approach allows for the systematic processing of lexico-phonetic material:

Listening (Auditing). Initial perception of the material occurs through audiovisual channels. The child listens to the poem «The Little Bell» (Dzvinochok) and a song about a bee. The primary goal is to teach the child to distinguish the specific affricates [d͡z] and [d͡zʲ] within the flow of speech. The use of multimedia support (such as YouTube links for the «Spinning Top» (Dzyga) language warm-up or an educational video about the [d͡z] sound) provides a correct phonetic model for pronunciation, allowing the child to perceive the language at a natural pace and rhythm. Fragments of poetry, such as «*Rano v tyshi lisovii dzenkniv dzvonyk holubyi...*» (In the early silence of the woods, a little blue bell tinkled...), serve as a mnemonic tool where rhythmization facilitates the memorization of complex lexemes.

Reading and Pronunciation (Phonetic Reception). At the A1 level for children aged 4–6, «reading» primarily consists of recognizing the graphic image of a word in combination with visual aids (the global reading method). The methodological framework of the lesson involves the visualization of lexemes through a system of numbered images (for example, image No. 6 – *gudzyk* [button], image No. 20 – *dyvan* [sofa]). This allows the child to associate the word directly with the object, minimizing the need for translation. Special attention is paid to articulatory training: practicing tongue twisters (*chystomovky*) and syllables (*dza, dzo, dzu, dze, dzy, dzi*), which prepares the vocal apparatus for the pronunciation of full-meaning words.

Speaking (Repetition and Production). The emphasis is placed on reproductive speaking using the «Listen – Repeat – Find – Say» model. The child learns to answer questions about objects in the room and to comment on actions. Contextualization involves a transition from isolated sounds to complete sentences embedded within the «The Room» thematic field. Special attention is given to differentiating bird species based on the shape of their beaks (*dziob*) – such as the parrot, stork, and woodpecker – which expands the vocabulary through biological realities while simultaneously reinforcing the articulation of the word «dziob» (beak).

Writing (Graphic Reproduction). For preschoolers, this activity is implemented through graphomotor exercises: tracing letter outlines, drawing objects (*dzyga* [spinning top], *dzerkalo* [mirror]), and copying short names. This helps overcome graphic interference and reinforces the «phoneme–grapheme» connection.

Lexico-Grammatical Minimum and Scientific Rationale. For effective material acquisition at the A1 level, an optimal volume of learning units has been defined. The active vocabulary of the lesson (20 units) includes household items (table, wardrobe, bed, lamp, carpet, sofa, mirror), clothing (jacket, button, jumper, jeans), and nature/technical objects (bee, corn, spinning top, jeep). This volume corresponds to the psychological norm of a child's short-term memory (Miller's Law), which posits that up to 20 objects can be acquired during a single lesson divided into playful blocks.

To form a «speech framework» an adapted minimum set of phrases (7 constructions) has been developed based on the topic «My Room»: *This is my room. A large mirror hangs on the wall. My jacket is lying on the bed. There are jeans and a jumper in the wardrobe. A bright spinning top is spinning on the floor. Sweet jam is on the table. A small button is in the box.* The selection of seven constructions is methodologically justified: at the A1 level, the priority is not the quantity of sentences, but their repeated reproduction. Using stable patterns such as «On/In [location] there is [object]» helps the child intuitively acquire grammatical structures (specifically, the locative case) without the need to study theoretical rules.

Methodological Recommendations. The structure of the manual includes a «Teacher's Section», which focuses on transformation exercises and the execution of instructions. This approach stimulates proactive speech, removes psychological barriers to complex sound combinations, and ensures a smooth transition to higher levels of language proficiency.

The effectiveness of teaching Ukrainian as a Foreign Language (UFL) using the textbook «My Friends» (Moi Druzi) (Part 3) is ensured by strict adherence to methodological strategies aimed at minimizing language interference and developing the cognitive skills of the allophone child. The key directions for overcoming linguistic barriers identified in the manual include:

Phonetic and Phonemic Aspect. The correction of the articulation of specific Ukrainian sounds (the vowel [y] (и), affricates [d͡z] (дж) and [d͡zʲ] (дз), and the sound combination [shch] (щ)) is implemented through a step-by-step algorithm: from auditory recognition of phonemes to their correct reproduction within lexemes and sentences.

Graphic and Orthographic Propaedeutics. Great attention is paid to visualizing the structure of words (iotated letters я, ю, є, ї, and the combinations йо, бо). Exercises for writing the soft sign (ь) and the apostrophe are integrated into a playful context, which helps children distinguish between graphemes and phonemes without excessive theoretical overload.

Morphological and Lexical Component. The training is based on 20 thematic lessons where grammatical material (gender, number of nouns, prepositions, and the particle *ne* [not]) is woven into the lexical environment. This ensures the mastery of approximately 1,000 words and 400 phrases at the A1–A2 levels.

Methodological Strategies and Practical Tools:

Correctional-Phonetic Strategy (Lessons 2, 3, 6, 7). Taking the topic «The Room» (Lesson 6) as an example, a cyclic method is implemented: «Listen – Repeat – Find – Say». This allows the child to transition from passive reception of complex affricates to their active use in speaking.

Grammatical Integration (Lessons 10–13, 18). Instead of studying rules, children are offered a contextual approach. For example, the category of number is acquired through describing body parts (*oko/ochi* – eye/eyes), and negation is learned through

describing one's own skills («*Ya ne vmiyu...*» – I cannot/don't know how to...).

Ethnocultural and Sociolinguistic Component (Lessons 19–20). Blocks dedicated to national holidays (Christmas, Easter) develop sociocultural competence through the study of specific vocabulary (*didukh, pysanka*) and etiquette formulas for greetings.

Multimedia Synergy. A key innovation of the manual is the combination of printed text with digital content. The use of QR codes to access songs, videos, and poems (for example, about bees or a spinning top) creates a dynamic language environment. A system of conventional symbols («Circle», «Draw», «Remember») stimulates fine motor skills, which serves as the foundation for successful writing.

Conclusions. The methodological model of the «My Friends» (*Moi Druzi*) textbook allows for the effective minimization of language interference and establishes a stable foundation for further Ukrainian language study. A comprehensive approach to overcoming pronunciation and writing difficulties, based on the integration of the four language skills, ensures a consistent transition for the child to the A2 level, maintaining high learning motivation through playful and visual elements.

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Дата першого надходження статті до видання: 09.01.2026

Дата прийняття статті до друку після рецензування: 13.02.2026

Дата публікації (оприлюднення) статті: 27.03.2026

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