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REVIEW

The improvement of preschool educators in communication skills: describing and narrating from an interdisciplinary perspective

La superación de las educadoras de la infancia preescolar en las habilidades comunicativas: describir y relatar desde la interdisciplinariedad

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the crucial stage of early childhood in the formation of personality, emphasizing the importance of high-quality education for children from 0 to 6 years of age. It underlines the need for a complete and constant preparation during this vital phase, highlighting the fundamental role of teachers in improving their pedagogical performance. The main objective of the article is to present preliminary findings of an exploratory study. This study focuses on the professional needs and deficiencies of teachers dedicated to the communicative skills in Mother Tongue during Early Childhood, specifically in the Luyanó Popular Council of the Diez de Octubre municipality, Havana. The results suggest that these needs can be effectively addressed through a professional improvement approach that is systematic and continuous. This approach includes the management of fundamental theoretical tools based on cognitive, communicative and sociocultural perspectives, as well as the conception of an interdisciplinary and enriching educational process.

Keywords: Socio-Cultural Perspective; Early Childhood; Cognitive Perspective; Communicative Skills; Cognitive Perspective.

RESUMEN

Este artículo explora la etapa crucial de la Primera Infancia en la formación de la personalidad, enfatizando la importancia de una educación de alta calidad para niños de 0 a 6 años. Subraya la necesidad de una preparación completa y constante durante esta fase vital, destacando el rol fundamental de los docentes en mejorar su desempeño pedagógico. El objetivo central del artículo es presentar hallazgos preliminares de un estudio exploratorio. Este estudio se centra en las necesidades y carencias profesionales de las docentes que se dedican a las habilidades comunicativas en Lengua Materna durante la Primera Infancia, específicamente en el consejo Popular Luyanó del municipio Diez de Octubre, La Habana. Los resultados sugieren que estas necesidades pueden ser abordadas eficazmente mediante un enfoque de superación profesional que sea sistemático y continuo. Este enfoque incluye la gestión de herramientas teóricas fundamentales basadas en perspectivas cognitivas, comunicativas y socioculturales, así como la concepción de un proceso educativo interdisciplinario y enriquecedor.

Palabras clave: Perspectiva Sociocultural; Perspectiva Cognitiva; Primera Infancia; Habilidades Comunicativas.

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INTRODUCTION

The improvement of educators should be directed towards ensuring the acquisition of skills, habits, and modes of operation that enable them to undergo comprehensively development for their engagement with children. Therefore, it should address the child in all dimensions: cognitive, procedural, and axiological.[1,2]

For such an ambitious objective, an essential element involves attending to the communicative dimension or developmental domains that consider the Mother Tongue as the guiding program, in its character as a socio-cultural mediator. Grounded in this reference, the research exclusively concentrates on the communicative dimension, as it fosters the development of the abilities and the dimensions that each of them encompasses, proving pivotal for the integral development of children. Here, relationships are established to fulfill needs and forge emotional bonds, making it of critical importance not only for their development as social beings but also for the progression of the rest of the dimensions. This communicative dimension stands as the cornerstone, facilitating the establishment of relationships with the surroundings and cultivating an ability to explore the context in which they participate.[3,4,5]

Every form of communication established by the child builds upon preceding ones, transforming them to some extent, yet never suppressing them. As the children grow older, they utilize all means within their grasp, with increased flexibility. The more varied and richer their interactions are with those around them and with the cultural productions, the more easily they transform their communication methods, enrich their language and expressiveness and diversify the means to do so by appropriating new possibilities provided by the context. The consulted literature on this matter underscores its utmost relevance, being a subject of international inquiry and study among linguists, pedagogue, psychologists, philosophers, and communications specialists.[6,7,8,9]

These theoretical foundations supported the assertion of the imperative to strengthen the professional improvement system within the educational institution. This emphasis is placed on the broad career profile of educators, requiring a qualification that enables them to fulfill the expectations of comprehensive care, as educators are who induce the training of individuals during a period marked by significant acquisitions in the life of every human being.[10,11,12,13]

Another piece of evidence of the importance and relevance of the research topic is its alignment with the psychological and human nature of the educational change process.

In the training of early childhood professionals, changes are driven by four reasons: research on the distinctive traits of Cuban children aged 0 to 6 years within the First Educational Level in Early Childhood, the quality of the educational process, the integration with other areas of development, and the consolidation of an authentically Cuban pedagogy that incorporates the most favorable aspects of both national and international pedagogical scientific experiences, with a creative and contextualized adaptation to the Cuban reality in the refinement of the curriculum.[14,15,16,17,18,19]

METHOD

A qualitative research was conducted. This article addresses the professional improvement of preschool educators, emphasizing the communicative skills in the mother tongue and their integration into other areas of development within their pedagogical profile. Educators should focus not only on logical-educational intelligence but also on logical-affective, emotional, and aesthetics aspects.

A curriculum proposal with a more integrative character was elaborated, organized into dimensions, and extends its scope to encompass the family, as a unique document that consolidates a comprehensive guide for the care of children aged 0 to 6 years, irrespective of whether it is institutional or non-institutional settings. The refinement of this curriculum poses a challenge to Early Childhood educators, as it engenders new approaches of pedagogical action.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The development of the communicative dimension: Mother Tongue in the First Educational Level of preschool

One of the pivotal achievements in communication, and undoubtedly in psychical development, is the assimilation of the mother tongue. The emergence and development of language mark a significant juncture in the evolutionary trajectory of psychical development; although thought preexists language, in the typical process of action, the course of thought is permanently linked to language from that moment onwards. Language, therefore, evolves into the fundamental means of expression for thought.[20]

Language serves not only as a tool for communication but also as a mode of consciousness of reality, a unique reflection of the world of objects and phenomena, whereby the psychical development of the individual becomes possible, encompassing both cognitive-intellectual and affective-emotional dimensions, as well as facilitating their own process of socialization.[21,22]

The grammatical forms of language, along with the content conveyed through words have undergone continuous evolution throughout the entire historical-social development of humanity. This evolution is intricately linked to the stages of assimilating the functions of objects. Consequently, one's language becomes enriched and refined over time.[23,24,25]

Before delving into the analysis of the various aspects that constitute the conception of the developmental educational process, it is necessary to emphasize that a comprehensive systematization has been carried out involving Cuban and international authors and research. This has significantly enriched the ensemble of results pertaining to this approach and its potential implementation in preschool education. The aim is to highlight their key contributions in a brief summary that facilitates an understanding of the positioning of research works and authors. These serve as essential reference benchmarks for the duty of both researchers and educators focused on these objectives.

It is equally significant to highlight authors who, within the framework of Didactics, have contemplated the particularities of the teaching-learning process.[26] Although these authors may not have adhered to this approach, they played crucial roles during their eras in delineating the extent of school teaching and learning. Therefore, their initial references hold great importance as a foundation for subsequently directing our attention towards the latest contributions of the developmental conception.[27,28]

Educators working within the Luyanó Popular Council of the Diez de Octubre municipality may have access to documents containing essential guidelines for their work in the education and developmental dimension of communication. This potentially facilitates the achievement of the utmost comprehensive development of infants and prepares educators adequately to lead the learning process for subsequent grades. However, there is a notable absence of a pedagogical strategy for professional improvement, and educators, in reality, lack the readiness to effectively teach the content and engage systematically with all the normative documents provided to them. So, educators are perceived to have limited theoretical and methodological mastery of these topics, evident in their results, the execution of the planned activities, and the implementation of diagnostic tasks. This poses a challenge for the municipal problem bank, underscoring the importance of not overlooking their level of preparation and teaching category.

If we acknowledge that the pursued goal of Preschool Education is to attain the utmost comprehensive development of boys and girls, preschool didactics can have no other objective than the educational process in its entirety, understanding that education is the guidance and influence on development.[29] The findings of studies conducted at the Latin American Reference Center for Preschool Education (CELEP), particularly those pertaining to the improvement of teaching staff and the assessment system for educational quality, are in harmony with this approach.

The systematization conducted, along with the research findings and insights derived from pedagogical work, reveals that the problematic situation is given by:

- Inadequate mastery of the teacher over the theoretical-methodological foundations necessary for interpreting, identifying, and making inferences about potential difficulties in child development.
- Educators show difficulties in executing differentiated actions for the treatment of the Mother Tongue, especially in the modalities of communicative skills of describing and narrating in preschool children.
- There is a shortfall in the planning, execution, and control of tasks by educators that incorporate the treatment of the Mother Tongue in all its communicative forms.
- Educators lack knowledge about designing activities that foster the development of the mother tongue, resulting in a dearth of initiatives for improvement in this area.

In light of the findings, the following problematic situation emerges: There is a lack of continuous professional improvement in terms of communicative skills, particularly in describing and narrating. This is rooted from the theoretical conceptions of the educational process and highlights the existing contradiction between the professional performance of preschool educators in communicative abilities and the ongoing improvement required by their social commitment. This dilemma gives rise to the formulation of the following social problem in science and technology: the improvement of communicative skills among preschool educators as an imperative societal necessity.

Consequently, the formulated objective is: to analyze the references provided by social sciences in general and pedagogical sciences in particular, to address the development of communicative skills, particularly in describing and narrating, among preschool educators. The essence lies in educators understanding the fundamental principles of methodologies and effectively working towards their implementation. This marks an important juncture in preparing children to assimilate knowledge, fostering language fluency, expressiveness, and spontaneity. However, it must also constitute an important component of consciously organized efforts in the relations between disciplines, subjects, and areas of development.[30]

As the Educational Process spans the entire life of a child, from the beginning of a day until its end, it is crucial to guarantee a diverse array of activities during all hours. This approach ensures that every moment in a child's life could be considered an educational opportunity involving the family, educators, and other educational agents. Emphasizing a playful approach is essential, as this perspective enables integration with the rest of the dimensions in their entirety, whether related to science, language, or other areas. It facilitates the development of a myriad of skills, including intellectual, communicative, motor, manual, and others.[31,32,33,34]

Enrichment of Internal Language. Vocabulary.

During these particular years of life, there is a noteworthy emphasis on the execution of cognitive tasks, and the self-directed language exhibit increased fragmentation, featuring prolonged murmurs or micro-movements of the lips accompanied by inaudible or extremely low sounds. Furthermore, there are periods of concentration characterized by complete verbal absence, indicating a gradual consolidation of internal language, a heightened "interiorization" of self-directed language. It becomes apparent that this internal language serves as a guide for both manual and mental actions, illustrating the relationship between language and cognition.

Components of the mother tongue:[35,36,37]

- Phonetic-phonological: this component encompasses the range of sounds within a language, including their models and ideal types, known as phonemes. They are developed through the perception and imitation of sounds as well as their combinations in words. The articulation and differentiation of these sounds are refined gradually over time.
- Lexical-semantic: this component is related to vocabulary, involving the comprehension, and utilization of language (words) based on their meanings.
- Grammatical: it encompasses morphology (laws of word transformation) and syntax (the combination of words within a sentence). This component emerges later than the phonetic-phonological and lexical-semantic components, and its alteration may imply limitations in the other language aspects.

Phonetics, lexicon, and grammar collectively constitute a unified system of language, conditioning and interrelating with each other in a dialectical manner.

The significance of the pedagogical activity of the Mother Tongue lies in making verbal communication the dominant feature, rather than the mere knowledge acquisition about the object itself: this represents a radical departure from the traditional approach to this type of activity, placing oral expression as the fundamental aspect to which other components are subordinated.

The process of assimilating the Mother Tongue, guided by the preschool teacher, should unfold naturally as it occurs in everyday life experiences, avoiding the organization of artificial situations or pedagogical means that are completely unrelated to the child's lived experiences.[38]

Language is conceptualized as a peculiar form of knowledge or conception of objects and phenomena of the reality. It serves as an indirect means of comprehending the surrounding reality, manifested through one's native language.[39,40,41]

It illustrates that phenomena do not exist separately, and by interrelating them through content, it delineates a framework of integration, interaction, and interdependence in the development of the world.

Educators must understand that communication is aimed at unveiling its profound significance for the development of a child's personality throughout their education. Understanding its role in the development of human consciousness holds paramount importance for the educational process, as it serves as a dialogue and interaction process between children and other educational agents.[42]

For the communicative actions carried out by educators to be successful, a scientific understanding is required. This necessitates a permanent improvement process focused on the strengthening of their psychological and pedagogical knowledge in alignment with their educational mission. The role played by pedagogical science universities nationwide is decisive for this purpose, as their goals encompass the possibility of having highly qualified educators, who are committed to professional formation.[43,44]

When addressing this matter, it is asserted that educators should undergo comprehensive development with the intention of fostering creativity and problem-solving skills, with the necessary flexibility to develop the educational action in accordance with the specific characteristics of early childhood institutions.[45,46,47]

In this undertaking, communicative skills, particularly describing and narrating, assume a role of excellence, originating from the socialization process in which human beings unfold; it is an essential process for personality development, occurring within an interactive and collaborative framework.

As a guiding program, the mother tongue must be integrated into all areas of development, whether in the sciences or humanities, due to its pedagogical purpose. Communication, as a fundamental pillar in our social life, establishes the groundwork for communicative and affective relationships. In this manner, it is deemed an effective channel for psychic development.

CONCLUSIONS

Professional improvement in the leadership of the educational process in the area of the mother tongue holds vital importance for the mastery and development of communicative skills, especially in describing and narrating. This involves considering the methodologies to be employed and imparting skills to children that enable them to align with contemporary times, as it aids in adapting their behavior to societal needs, with the initiation of this process in Early Childhood, as the first educational level.

Considering that everyone in institutions has an equal right to be prepared for the current knowledge society, giving special attention to communicative skills is justified by social demands, as the harmonious insertion and socio-personal development of individuals depend on these skills.

FINANCING

None.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest.

AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION

Conceptualization: Mercedes Shuman Padrón.
Research: Mercedes Shuman Padrón.
Methodology: Mercedes Shuman Padrón.
Writing - original draft: Mercedes Shuman Padrón.
Writing - revision and editing: Mercedes Shuman Padrón.

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ANNEXES

Supplementary material #1

Thematic plan	Class hours	Hours of independent work
Theme I: Introduction.	2	2
Theme II: Determining activity objectives.	2	2
Theme III: Determining teaching content.	2	2
Theme IV: Determining method and procedures.	2	2
Theme V: Determining the system of teaching aids.	2	2
Theme VI: Determining the evaluation system.	2	2
Final evaluation: Integrative workshop.	4	8
Total	16	20
Overall total hours	36	

Methodological guidelines for each theme

For the methodological guidelines, the author will utilize the proposal put forth by Professors Hiraida Rodríguez Mondeja and Lucía de la Grana Hernández, recognizing their pedagogical value and their alignment with the identified improvement needs.

Supplementary material #2

PLANNED ACTIVITIES

Actions	**Operations**
1. To determinate the objectives of the activity	Using correctly the Education Program. Selecting the objective. Deriving and formulating the objective.
2. To determinate the content of teaching	Determining the system of knowledge, habits, and skills in accordance with the objectives. Determining the educational aspect. Determining the relationship with other dimensions. Adjusting the content to the characteristics of the children. Determining the logical sequence of the content.
3. To determine the method and procedures	Structuring the system of methods and procedures. Developing the methodological structure. Determining the system of actions for the educator and the children, with a sequence.
4. To determine the system of teaching aids	Structured according to the objectives and the method. Adapting the means to the educator-children action system.
5. To determine the evaluation system	Ensuring unity of the evaluation with the objectives-content-method. Structuring a varied character evaluation system. Verifying the essential aspects of the content during the activity

Evaluation of the outcomes in the implementation of the improvement strategy involving the use of technologies for the development of the Mother Tongue in preschool. The planned activities should be directed towards accomplishing the teaching tasks for the early years of life and the development of skills. These tasks are predetermined and outlined in the corresponding program and are interconnected with other areas of development. Each proposed activity must be accompanied, in each instance, by various procedures, employing the appropriate methodological steps.

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