

EDU WORLD 2022**Edu World International Conference Education Facing Contemporary World Issues****THE ROLE OF MEMORIZATION ACTIVITIES FOR
PRESCHOOL CHILDREN**

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Abstract

An important factor in language education, memorization is focused on the objectives of preschool education and is consistent with the age of the children. This contributes to the development of logical memory, and the formation of individuality according to inner psychic processes. The children's ability to assimilate words at this stage is very high, as they show constant curiosity, enjoying the new intellectual acquisitions. At the same time, under the influence of poetic images, the creative activity of children expands its content (mainly through games, drawings, stories and gales). Given the influence of poetry on the development of all aspects of the preschooler's personality, memorization occupies an important place in the instructive-educational activity in kindergarten, and is a valuable means of knowledge, speech development, cultivation of aesthetic and moral feelings, and practice of memory and stimulation of the creative imagination. He children who are entrusted to the caring hands of the kindergarten teacher will normally develop to be sensitive to beauty, to the musicality of their mother tongue. Simple artistic images from a poem, usual words intertwined in a comparison, in a personification or in a hyperbole open in the child's mind the perspective of novel, unsuspected meanings.

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1. Introduction

Memorization activities have a great instructive-educational importance, consisting in intellectual education, the formation of moral and aesthetic feelings and the development of mental processes such as memory, imagination and thinking. Through poetry, children learn to understand the beauty of art, nature and human life, to notice the musicality and beauty of their mother tongue.

Poetry is synonymous with beauty and has multiple educative-formative values that need to be exploited at preschool age, that is, when children themselves are a poem (Albulescu & Catalano, 2019a).

Poems and rhymes develop the children's aesthetic perception and their aesthetic feelings, and stimulate their creation faculties. By learning and reciting verse, children discover words with new meanings, acquire literary expressions, poetic figures that add color and nuance to their vocabulary. Gradually, children learn to understand the message of poetry, to recite poetry expressively, to respect the grammatical, logical and psychological pauses marked by punctuation, the meaning of the sentence or the rhyming phrase. The attractive things we convey to the children develop their interest, curiosity and perseverance. Telling stories and understanding the message of simple poetry greatly motivate the children, while the interaction teacher-children is enhanced, which contributes to the children's general development. The process of memorization, as a "psychic" process, includes three successive phases:

1. The acquisition-recovery stage or phase (actual memorization);
2. The retention-storage stage;
3. Reactivation stage (involving recognition and reproduction).

Along with thinking, memorization is at the heart of the learning process. The young child is characterized by a series of features that make it possible to easily retain items in their memory, by means of memorization:

- children have a concrete intuitive type of thinking;
- they have high mental elasticity;
- they memorize very easily;
- involuntary memory is fully functioning at this age.]

2. Problem Statement

As a psychic process, memorization consists in recording and retaining, in the memory, the information from the surrounding world; the student's activity of retaining and imprinting in his/her mind what must be assimilated in the process of his/her intellectual learning and formation. Special mnemonic procedures ensure thorough and productive memorization:

Systematization and ordering of the material in a plan or scheme, confrontation of memorized knowledge both with each other and with that previously acquired, establishing logical associations or with various intuitive images, with the layout scheme of the material in space; establishing the similarities and differences between the notions to be acquired; performing various exercises and applications; the reproduction of the material during the learning, the attempt to present to another

child what has been memorized – as a factor of confirmation and self-confirmation of the fidelity and clarity of the things retained (Dictionary of Pedagogy, 1979, pp. 268-269).

In the activity of consolidating the memory, procedures can be used such as: role recitations; combining individual recitation with collective recitation under the conditions established above; selective recitation, as a possibility to verify the comprehension of the text and the concretization of the memorization. In order to develop the diction and to highlight the beauty of the language, the following steps can be undertaken, procedures: the analysis, together with the children, of some verses; using play elements to reveal the rhythm and rhyme of poetry; mimicking moods; reproduction of onomatopoeias or sounds from nature, movements and sounds of natural phenomena, etc.

It is very important to respect the didactic principle regarding the suitability of the contents to the age characteristics of the children, according to the criterion of accessibility (Mazilescu, 2020).

3. Research Questions

Does memorization, through the content and form of the studied poems, contribute to the cultivation of children's aesthetic and moral sense?

Many of the poems portray for the children events of social significance; there are also poems that show the children some characteristic aspects of the seasons, their beauty (for example, there are poems that depict aspects of work at the children's own level of understanding, or capture the characteristic features of some animals the children love; other poems help children to develop habits of civilized behavior).

Did the poems, in the process of assimilation and adaptation, undergo certain transformations in content and form, in order to match the knowledge needs of the students, assigning them new functions?

What is the role of poetry in the development of children's creativity?

4. Purpose of the Study

The aim of this research was to form the skills to memorize and reproduce poems voluntarily and logically, and to render them in a nuanced and expressive manner. At the same time, we aimed to make children aware of the expressiveness of language by learning words and expressions with emotional value.

5. Research Methods

The research methods used are those that analyze the lyrical text, from the perspective of its formative-informative value.

The teaching of poems to preschoolers is done according to the particular traits of the learning process, especially their memory. In establishing the main tasks of teaching poetry, one must take into account the intuitive, plastic, concrete character of memory, the tendency of young children to memorize involuntarily, but also the insufficient mastery by children of memorization procedures of great importance in the process of memorizing a poem, or the interest and emotion that poetry arouses.

We can understand the whole of the poetry for children, as it is received at preschool age, if we relate it to the specific structure of the nursery rhymes, the rhythmic schemes of which actually continue the first short, sprightly rhythms of the childhood games.

The use of multimedia elements and interactive learning leads to increasing motivation and ensuring success (Albulescu & Catalano, 2021).

6. Findings

The memorization activity is one of the main means used in kindergarten as early the first age group, in order to develop the children's mnemonic functions. Throughout preschool, children memorize and reproduce verse with interest, especially when they address their affectivity and understanding, which leads to the active practice of memory.

The intellectual training of students is targeted and achieved, mainly, in school, through the learning process, respectively their informative and formative values (Bocoş & Jucan, 2019).

At an early age, preschoolers involuntarily retain lyrics; they do not intend in advance to be attentive in learning them. Gradually, through exercises, children begin to understand the need for restraint in order to later reproduce, and thus the mnemonic purpose appears. In this way the transition is made from involuntary memory (unintentional recording of data) to voluntary memory (when data is recorded consciously and voluntarily). This transition occurs from middle preschool age, and is enhanced in high preschool age.

Young children find it quite difficult to stay quiet for longer periods of time, as they like action and movement instead. "Sensory-perceptual progress is associated with the development of motor skills, increased attention, the concentration of which increases with age" (Mitu & Antonovici, 2005, p. 7). In order to reconcile the both of them, the poetry intended for them must contain fairly rapid changes of images, not descriptive lines, but action.

Taking into account this particularity of memory, its predominantly involuntary character, memorization activities must be prepared according to the specifics of each group.

Through memorizations, the children are communicated with different aspects of life presented in an attractive, artistic form. So, in addition to the fact that memorization is a good exercise for memory, at the same time it has a pronounced instructive-educational character (Mazilescu, 2019).

Poetry teaches the child, from an early age, what is good and what is bad, what is beautiful and what is ugly, what to do and what to avoid. Through the musicality of the verse or lyrics, it attracts children, from an early age, to understand the forms of artistic expression and arts. But all these tasks, which memorization can solve, are equally conditioned by the content of the poem.

Poetry must be accessible to children and eloquent, evoke vivid, powerful representations that move them, make them live alongside the heroes. In choosing the content of the memorizations, for each age group the following criteria will be taken into account: the choice of an accessible, attractive, and at the same time instructive-educational content.

The complex role that motivation has in learning a poem is also conditioned by the care for maintaining a balance between the presence of rewards and the internal side of motivation (Albulescu & Catalano, 2019b).

The memorizations indicated for small groups do not fully meet these requirements, given the difficulty of writing for 3-4 year-olds. The teacher has the opportunity to choose poems appropriate to the age and understanding of small group preschoolers.

The methods and procedures used in memorization are also specific to each age group. Although children, especially those in the youngest group, enjoy poetry very much, the activity of teaching memorization must be very well prepared, in order to ensure the active participation of the whole group.

“By satisfying their curiosity and desire, by encouraging them to tell stories, the teacher builds strong bridges between herself and the child” (Duțu, 1997, p. 110).

Little preschoolers cannot make it their aim to be attentive to memorize (a feature mentioned above). Because memorization is possible only in its involuntary forms, the children of the youngest groups will be directed towards activities through play, through procedures specific to their understanding. Memorization can often take the form of a dramatization (e.g. memorizations “Hanky”, “Teddy Bear”, etc., in which the children’s attention is retained through the use of toys).

In the middle and eldest groups, the teaching of memorizations is moving further and further away from the mentioned game procedures, while also the emphasis in these groups is mainly on prior preparation. “The teacher must be excited after every success, progress made by the group or by the child to prepare the motivation for the next tasks” (Breben et al., 2002, p. 12).

Any memorization activity must be preceded by explanations of the text of the poem, whether this explanation is made through play, or takes the form of a story (prose translation of verse), or a conversation (encompassing all aspects of the poem). These preliminary explanations facilitate the understanding of the content of the poem, so memorization becomes logical (poetry makes sense to children, it is not merely “recorded” and mechanically reproduced).

Memorization based on mechanical acquisition does not even benefit the child in exercising memory. However, by mastering the meaning of words, consciously acquiring them, they become regulatory norms for the child. Also for this purpose, i.e. the most accurate understanding of the meaning of poetry, memorizations are avoided, if the words are not known by children in advance, and the forms of expression cannot be understood by preschoolers, either due to a kind of humor which is too subtle for the small children, or the evocation of vaguely outlined images, weakly differentiated in the consciousness of preschoolers.

Learning has an individualized character because it acquired differently by each student, but also a social character because it acquired together with other students (Albulescu & Catalano, 2022).

In the case of new words or subtleties that preschoolers can only understand if they are explained in advance, the teacher will present the text so that they can use the word with a synonym, known to the children, in order to translate the image shaped in the poem into words that are easier to understand (e.g. the memorization of “Winter” by V. Anițescu).

It is advisable that parents and kindergarten teachers should always keep in mind that it is much more important for the child’s intellectual development that they be helped to correctly pronounce the sounds rather than allowed, for the sake of ‘being cute’, to pronounce words that are unclear, incorrectly articulated. When not corrected, such forms will eventually become fixed through repetition, hindering the development of language, which is so decisive in the children’s intellectual formation.

Knowledge is influenced by the flows of connections, the optimal learning strategy involves making imaginative, meaningful associations between different subjects (Neacșu et al., 2020).

It is necessary that “the artistic expressions and/ or structures of the poems enter the active vocabulary of the children by memorizing them” (Balint, 2008, p. 17).

After the content of the poem has been communicated to the children, the teacher should recite the entire the text to be memorized, slowly and in an expressive manner. They repeat it to make it easier to learn. Then three or four children are chosen in turn, who will recite the poem in its entirety, helped by the teachers so that they can respect the text, achieving clarity and expressiveness in speech.

In the last part of the activity, the memorizations previously taught are repeated, in order to learn the text and to reproduce it as expressively as possible.

Here are some examples of memorization activities, by age groups:

Youngest Group

Lullaby

Purpose: by imitation, the children should render the quiet tone of the verse.

Material: 2-3 dolls

The text: “Come on, my sweetie, come on birdie, / Go to sleep, sleep and never fear.(<http://tra-la-la.ro/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Hai-odor.pdf>)

Directions. In a short story, the teacher shows the mother’s love for the children and her loving care when putting them to sleep with a song. The teacher announces that today she will teach them a lullaby with which to put their dolls to sleep, and taking a doll in her arms, she recites the above verses in a slow, quiet manner.

Snowdrop

Purpose: correct pronunciation of words and clear recitation of poetry. Fixing the knowledge taught about the snowdrop.

The text: “Little snowdrop / Like a bell / Get your head out of the snow! / The children want to see you!” (<https://rightwords.ro/folclor/clopotel-mititel-scoate-capul-din-zapada-primavara-sa-o--2705>).

Directions: The teacher will capture the children’s attention, bringing in front of them a snowdrop that she will move easily so that the little flower sways like a bell. When all the children are attentive, she will recite the lyrics, addressing them to the snowdrop. She will repeat the poem 2-3 times. Then she will ask the children who wants to tell the snowdrop to stick its head out of the snow. She will call a child, who will repeat each verse as the teacher tells them. Then she will call 1 or 2 children to recite on their own, with her help.

Middle Group

On the way by Otilia Cazimir

Purpose: expressive recitation of lyrics. Preparing children for the celebration of the Christmas tree.

The text: “On the way uphill, Santa Claus / Started with the sack on his back. / The road is bad and slippery, / and the old man can’t go anymore. / Shaking his thin beard made of snow, / He sighs under the burden: / ‘Oh me, old man that I am, it’s so hard for me! / Now I stand and reckon / If it should not be

better for me / To move my time closer to summer, / For I am old and I can't make it anymore!"
(<https://www.povesti-pentru-copii.com/poezii-pentru-copii/otilia-cazimir/la-drum.html>).

Directions. The teacher will talk to the children about the celebration of the Christmas tree, about Santa Claus, about the fact that he is old, that he comes from afar and that the long and snowy road is very difficult, he is tired of walking through snow and cold. That's why Santa Claus is thinking of moving the celebration of the winter tree closer to summertime, so that the road is not so difficult.

The teacher will then announce to the children that she will tell them a poem about Santa Claus and how he thinks of moving the Christmas party. The teacher will recite the poem, then explain what the word *burden* means, and then ask the children to recite the poem, helping them when necessary.

Winter by V. Anițescu

Purpose: explaining the specifics and the characteristics of winter; clear pronunciation of words; expressive rendering of the content.

The text: "It's has started snowing, / It is cold winter. / Hey, you little old auntie, go on sifting it, / Lay the baby nappy, / Shelter from the wind / The frail wheat stem, / Put ice flowers on the windows / And long icicles on the branches / And, dear auntie, also make / A path for the sleighs"
(<https://sanataatea.com/pub/anul-nou/206-iarna,-de-virginia-anitescu.html>).

Directions. There is an initial discussion with the children meant to explain to them various figures of speech in the text, such as "Hey, you little old auntie, go on sifting it, / Lay the baby nappy", "old woman winter", etc. The teacher explains: in winter, the white snow resembles an old woman. The layer of snow is like a diaper or nappy for the grain of wheat, which begins to sprout, as it protects it from the cold and wind. When it is cold, what do you cover the windows with? What hangs on the branches of trees when it is cold? The theme is announced: listen to the poem "winter". Let us see how a child asks Old woman winter.

The eldest group

Winter in the village streets by G. Coșbuc

Purpose: to enjoy the beauty of the lyrics and to feel their musicality; specifying some aspects of the phenomena in the winter season.

The text: "It started to fall yesterday, / first, one or two flakes, and now it's stopped. / The clouds are still scattered / to the west, but they are piled up / Over the village. / It's not sunny, but it's fine, / and along the river there is plenty of smoky fog. / The wind is calm now; / But there is tumultuous noise coming / from the road. / There are children with lots of sleds, / they come sleighing down the slope yelling / they push and shove, and laugh, / and kowtow, / willingly or not."
(https://www.poezie.ro/index.php/poetry/56852/Iarna_pe_ulita).

Directions. Discussion based on questions for the presentation of poetry. "Where do the snowflakes fall from, what is it that covers the ground when it snows?" The teacher tells the children that when the snow calms stops falling, the clouds are still scattered in the sky, but above the water you can see the clouds rising like smoke. What do children do when it snows and the wind calms down? What do you hear from where the children with the sledges gather? The educator announces that she will teach him a poem, "winter in the village streets", and draws their attention to listen carefully and see how beautiful

the poem sounds. An artistic recitation is mandatory. After reciting the poem twice, the teacher briefly recounts its contents, in order to accustom the children to cull the meaning of what is said in a verse form.

7. Conclusions

The instructive and educational importance of the memorization activities consists in both the education of a number of moral and aesthetic feelings, and the exercise and development of psychic processes such as memory, imagination, and thinking. The memorization activity, through its structure, requires the child to consciously memorize a number of verses and to reproduce them when requested.

The development and promotion of cognitive education will become more a condition of the quality of interactions between students and their school, family, social, community or professional environment (Neacșu, 2018).

Depending on the creativity and vocation of the educator, each moment of the proposed activities can be attractive and relaxing for the children. It is important to attract children to an effective voluntary participation, using individual recitation in combination with collective recitation (in the case of choruses) and role-playing, selective recitation, alternating recitation with mimicking movements, listening to text-related songs, listening to excerpts recited by children and recorded on CD or magnetic tape.

In a didactic activity, we must provide the student with the fundamental notions in a logical and orderly manner, which, at the end of the lesson, must be repeated for their better consolidation (Marinescu, 2021).

By systematically mastering accessible poetry, children become accustomed to learning consciously, and also become familiar with logical memorization procedures. In this sense, the functions of memory are practiced and its qualities are educated, as the child is being prepared for the learning process in school.

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