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**FAIRY-TALE THERAPY INFLUENCE ON SPEECH**  
**DEVELOPMENT IN PRESCHOOLERS WITH MENTAL**  
**DEVELOPMENT DELAY**

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***Abstract***

Recent studies show that an overwhelming majority of preschoolers with mental development delay have different speech impairments that are quite heterogeneous and vary in complexity and structure. Using fairy tale therapy in the correctional work can facilitate both the development of personality and speech in preschoolers with mental development delay. Owing to the application of the fairy tale therapy method in the correctional classes, most of preschoolers diagnosed with mental development delay progressively abandon the most non-verbal forms of communication and start using speech. It is also a possible method for the progressive increase of active vocabulary for this category of preschoolers. This study aims at determining efficient conditions of fairy tale therapy for the speech impairment correction in preschoolers with mental development delay. The experimental study consists of several stages: diagnostic (summative), development and control. The development stage results in a significant improvement of the speech development level in senior preschoolers with mental development delay in the experimental group in comparison with both primary diagnostics and the speech development level of the control group preschoolers. The study conducted enables us to make the conclusion that the correction of speech impairments in senior preschoolers with mental development delay could become more efficient. It can be achieved by using early diagnostics of the specific characteristics of speech development problems in preschoolers with mental development delay, and by using the advantages of the fairy tale therapy method in speech correction in senior preschoolers with mental development delay.

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**Keywords:** Fairy tale therapy, mental development delay, elementary-school age.



## 1. Introduction

In the modern development of social pedagogy, inclusive education system and correctional psychology, the issues of mental development delay are addressed with growing attention. First of all, it is due to the negative dynamics of increase in the number of preschoolers with different degrees of mental development delay, the absence of clearly defined criteria for the early diagnostics of this pathology, and the complex and multi-component characteristics of mental development delay in preschoolers. Therefore, there is an evident necessity for early diagnostics and more effective correctional work with preschoolers with mental development delay (Kislyakov et al., 2017).

Recent scientific studies in correctional psychology and pedagogy deal with such symptoms of mental development delay as impairments of cognitive and emotional functions (Zhukova et al., 2014; Triger, 2008; Shichanina, 2008). Cognitive activity impairments in preschoolers with mental development delay are usually manifested in the development of psychic processes, complex both in composition and in structure, such as speech, which in this category of preschoolers develops in a quite specific and varying manner (Levchenko, 2013; Kislyakov, 2017). Speech development in preschoolers with mental development delay is usually characterized by slow development rates, a number of qualitative particularities, and numerous impairments in speech development. This was repeatedly pointed out by such scientists as Gluhov (2013), Lalaeva et al. (2016), Traugott (2004), Shevchenko (2001).

In the modern stage of preschool education development a new area has emerged – game-playing methods in special psychology, which consider the fairy tale therapy approach as a leading method for speech impairments correction in preschoolers with mental development delay. Using fairy tale therapy in correctional work can facilitate both the development of personality and speech in preschoolers with mental development delay. Thanks to the fairy tale therapy method usage in correctional classes most of the preschoolers diagnosed with mental development delay can progressively abandon the mostly non-verbal forms of communication and start using speech. It is also a possible method for progressive increase of active vocabulary for this category of preschoolers (Kuzmin, 2015).

Fairy tales also carry knowledge about the outside world. By perceiving and evaluating the fairy tale narratives progressively, preschoolers with mental development delay learn to view themselves as actors of their own actions, and learn about the personalities of the characters in both Russian and foreign fairy tales. Thus fairy tales are an efficient means of correction. Besides that, the educational benefits of fairy tales as a special psychology instrument are also well-known. Fairy tales contribute to shaping and maintaining creative and constructive value systems in the senior preschoolers, they educate and help to solve social exclusion and anxiety problems, and, being accessible to preschoolers with mental development delay, help psychologists in their corrective work on speech development.

## 2. Problem Statement

The fairy tale therapy method is an effective method of work with preschoolers, but the conditions of its efficiency in correcting speech impairments in preschoolers with mental development delay have not yet been adequately studied.

### **3. Research Questions**

- How can the particularities of speech development in senior preschoolers with mental development delay be diagnosed?
- What are the particularities of speech development in senior preschoolers with mental development delay?
- How should the fairy tale therapy methods and approaches be used for correcting speech impairments in senior preschoolers with mental development delay?

What are the degree and conditions of efficiency for the corrective work using the fairy tale therapy method for correcting speech impairments in senior preschoolers with mental development delay?

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to determine the conditions of efficiency of fairy tale therapy for correcting speech impairments in preschoolers with mental development delay.

### **5. Research Methods**

We used the methods of observation, experiment, and biographic methods.

- The methodology developed by N.N. Pavlov, L.G. Rudenko, “Show and Tell”.
- The methodology developed by E.A. Strebeleva, “Tell the Story”.
- The methodology developed by N.N. Pavlov, L.G. Rudenko, “Successive Images”.
- The methodology “Creating a Dialogue based on Images”, recommended by V.I. Yashina.
- The methodology developed by N.A. Tsypina, “Coherent Speech Study”.

The study was conducted in the State Budgetary Educational Institution, Combined-Type Kindergarten No787 for children with disabilities, including preschoolers with mental development delay.

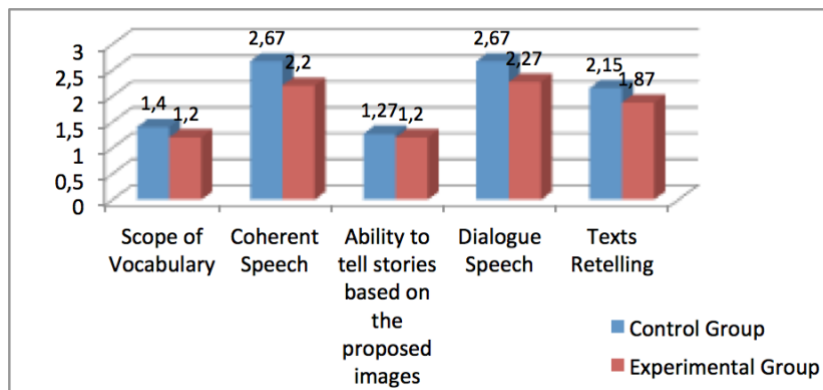
The experimental group consisted of 15 senior preschoolers with mental development delay; the control group consisted of 15 senior preschoolers with mental development delay.

### **6. Findings**

The experimental study consisted of several stages: diagnostic, development and control.

The diagnostics resulted in such speech indicators for the senior preschoolers with mental development delay as: the scope of vocabulary, coherent speech, ability to tell stories based on the proposed images, dialogue speech and texts retelling.

The diagnostic results showed that the speech development level in the experimental group preschoolers was significantly lower than in the control group preschoolers.



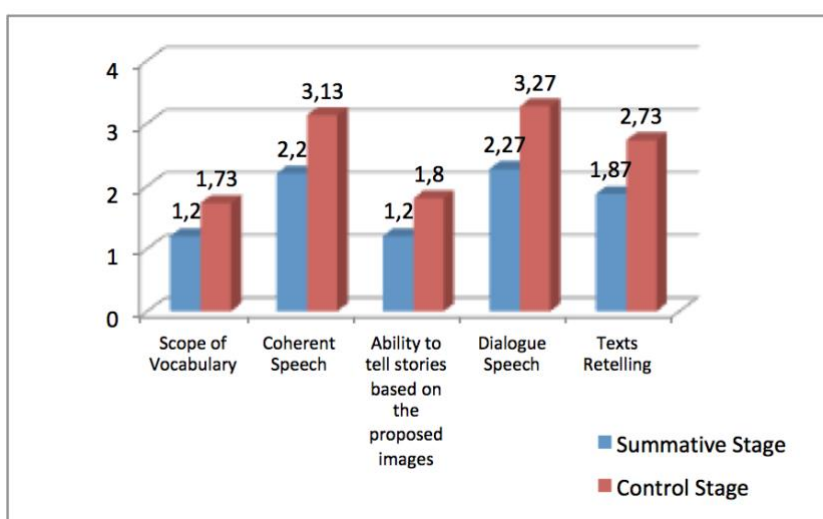
**Figure 01.** Comparative characteristic of the speech development level in senior preschoolers in the control and experimental groups (average values)

The correction program included 10 lessons for 40 to 45 minutes each, twice a week. The main correction method used was the fairy tale therapy method.

The development experiment resulted in a significant improvement of the speech development level in senior preschoolers with mental development delay in the experimental group in comparison to both primary diagnostics and the speech development level of the control group preschoolers.

After the correction program we conducted the second diagnostic of speech level development of the senior preschoolers with mental development delay in the experimental group.

The second diagnostics results showed a significant improvement in the speech development level in senior preschoolers with mental development delay in the experimental group owing to the positive dynamic in all the speech development components, such as: scope of vocabulary (+0.52), coherent speech (+0.93), telling stories based on the proposed images (+0.6), coherent dialogue speech (+1.0), texts retelling (+0.86).



**Figure 02.** Comparative characteristic of speech development level in senior preschoolers in the experimental group before and after the correction program (average notes)

Correlation analysis using Student's t-test showed that the results of all five methodologies aimed at diagnosing speech development level in senior preschoolers with mental development delay were significant.

Thus, the  $t(\text{emp})$  for the active vocabulary scope (the "Show and Tell" methodology) was of 2.9; for the coherent speech development (the "Tell the Story" methodology)  $t(\text{emp})$  was of 3,7; for the ability to tell stories based on the proposed images (the "Successive Images" methodology)  $t(\text{emp})$  was of 3.2; for the active dialogue speech development (the "Creating a Dialogue based on Images" methodology)  $t(\text{emp})$  was of 3.6; and for coherent text retelling abilities (the "Coherent Speech Study" methodology)  $t(\text{emp})$  was of 3.0.

Therefore, such approach used in the correction work on speech development in senior preschoolers with mental development delay, including both correction lessons with elements of fairy tale therapy and working with the closest entourage of the preschoolers from the experimental group with mental development delay, resulted in positive dynamics in the speech development of this category of children.

## 7. Conclusion

An overwhelming majority of preschoolers with mental development delay have different speech impairments that are quite heterogeneous, vary in complexity and structure, and take place due to the underdevelopment of their cognitive processes and emotional-volitional personality qualities.

The study has confirmed the efficiency of the applied psycho-diagnostic methodologies for the diagnostic of speech development: evaluating the active vocabulary development (the "Show and Tell" methodology), assessing the coherent speech development (the "Tell the Story" methodology), the ability to tell stories based on the proposed images (the "Successive Images" methodology), the active dialogue speech development (the "Creating a Dialogue based on Images" methodology) and the abilities for coherent text retelling (the "Coherent Speech Study" methodology).

Using fairy tale therapy in the correctional work facilitates both the development of personality and speech in preschoolers with mental development delay. Owing to the application of the fairy tale therapy method in correctional classes, most of the preschoolers diagnosed with mental development delay have progressively abandoned the most non-verbal forms of communication and started using speech. It is also a useful method for the progressive increase of active vocabulary for this category of preschoolers.

The study conducted allows us to make the conclusion that speech impairments correction in senior preschoolers with mental development delay would become more efficient by using early diagnostics of the specific characteristics of speech development issues in preschoolers with mental development delay, and by using the advantages of the fairy tale therapy method in speech correction for senior preschoolers with mental development delay.

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