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**FEATURES OF VERBAL COMMUNICATION OF PRIMARY  
SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT**

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*Abstract*

Problems of socialization are especially acute at primary school age when leading activity changes, and children are establishing their position in society by transforming principles of interaction with those surround them. Theoretical analysis of modern researches enabled to conclude that, on the one hand, primary school age is a sensitive period of predictive competence formation, and, on the other hand, this competence formation is impossible without communicative abilities development. The fundamental method of the research is experiment based on results of theoretical analysis of researches, diagnostics of verbal communication in the structure of predictive competence of primary school students with visual impairment and standard development. Theoretical analysis shows that the problem of studying communicative abilities of primary school students with visual impairment has been investigated insufficiently. The technique of communicative abilities diagnostics as risk identification instrument of deviation emergence in interpersonal relationship has not yet been developed. Speech-communicative difficulties revealed during experimental investigation confirmed that one of the factors that hinders predictive competence formation of primary school students is the deficiency of speech-communicative opportunities.

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**Keywords:** Communication, socialization, predictive competence, speech forecasting, primary school students, visual impairment.



## 1. Introduction

One of indicators of a psychologically healthy, able to overcome vital difficulties school student with limited opportunities of health is the developed ability to predictive activity the violation of which predetermines their social maladaptation. The last decade manifests that researches of communicative function of predictive competence in the context of communication and interaction of primary school students with objects of social reality have become especially relevant. The process of speech forecasting takes place when a primary school student comprehends another person's speech and produces own statements in the form of communication results anticipation. Developed skills of communication, therefore, make one of successful socialization components in primary school students as they are included both in the structure of educational actions and the solution of more complex tasks at the communicative level. Thus, verbal communication in the structure of predictive activity includes readiness for communication process, ability to plan it and predict results; ability to learn emotional states of others; readiness to follow social norms (Nichiporenko, 2007).

Nichiporenko and Mendelevich (2006) point out in their researches that verbal planning of activity appears in children aged 7-8 years. At the age of 10-11 years children are capable to act following the plan which they are able to keep in mind. Primary school students estimate the probability of various factors at the age of 8 years. And children of 9-10 years establish cause-effect relationships. The process of speech forecasting takes place both in the course of perception and reproduction of own statement, and developed skills are shown in the form of communication results anticipation. The child experiences great psychological comfort and satisfaction with the situation only in case if he/she successfully masters a new kind of activity (training) and easily finds common language with schoolmates and teachers. School students with visual impairment can stay in the situation of failure for a long time as their inability to contact with peers narrows their circle of friends, causes feelings of non-acceptance, loneliness in class, and provokes asocial forms of behavior both in educational and extracurricular activities when interacting with peers and adults.

## 2. Problem Statement

The issue of verbal communication in persons with developmental disabilities provides interest because of the fact that in the context of disrupted development this process acquires qualitative originality due to the structure of violation. Communication development in persons with standard development and visual impairment occurs identically, in general. However, blindness or visual impairment as a result of sensory sphere narrowing and specificity of visual image formation changes interaction of analyzers that leads to restructuring of links. Thereby, speech is formed in a bit different system; one can observe the peculiarity of speech development: change of both communication component and lexical-semantic aspect of speech formation rate. Children begin to avoid communication with peers, and gradually secondary impairments increasingly aggravate their social maladaptation. Reduced volume of communication causes predictive competence underdevelopment as an important indicator of successful socialization. However, analyses of modern researches have shown that the problem of verbal communication as predictive competence function in relation to primary school students with visual impairment has been investigated insufficiently.

### 3. Research Questions

At the current stage of studying predictive competence, issues of content characteristics of this phenomenon, its structural components, specific features of predictive competence formation in disabled school students are widely discussed in scientific community. The definition of predictive competence by Mendelevich and Solovyeva (2002) applied in the research. These authors consider this phenomenon as a personality feature, as a steady characteristic that records the level of anticipation abilities development which contribute to anticipation consistency interpreted as “personality ability to predict the course of events with a high probability, i.e. to forecast the development of situations and own reactions to them and act with time advance” (Mendelevich & Solovyeva, 2002). In this sense "consistency", is close to "competence", and in most cases these terms "anticipation consistency" and "predictive competence" are semantically the same (Nichiporenko, 2007). The study of this phenomenon structural components on the basis of the system approach proposed by Lomov and Surkov (1980) identified cognitive, regulatory and communicative components of predictive competence among which, as modern researchers point out, the communicative component is least studied.

The conducted analysis has brought us to the study of verbal communication impact on predictive competence formation as a condition of successful socialization in primary school students with limited health opportunities.

According to Ushakov (1987), formation of forecasting mechanisms in norm happens by the age of 11-13 years. However, he remarks, there are external and internal factors that can produce negative impact. He considers limited opportunities of health as one of them.

Psychology for special needs and pedagogy show interest in communication problems of persons with developmental impairment since in the context of disrupted development this process attains a qualitative peculiarity in terms of impairment structure.

Primary school students with limited opportunities of health have insufficiently developed communicative characteristics within sensitive period of child's formation, and that causes an increased level of anxiety. Since it is communicative formation that determines the specificity of child's behavior in a situation of complicated communication, it promotes either overcoming relevant communicative difficulties, or emergence and fixing of destructive (directed to destruction) forms of social behavior (Vundt, 2002).

The speech of the child with visual impairment develops in the same way as in norm in the process of specifically human activity - communication, but it has peculiarities of formation: retardation of speech formation rate at the initial stage due to insufficient active interaction with others in the course of object-practical activities. The significant role is played by violation of child's communication with micro social environment (Zaytsev, 2003). System underdevelopment of communication process is most typical for children with visual impairment. It externalizes in "formalism" of vocabulary, misunderstanding of the semantic aspect of a word which children do not correlate with a sensual image of the subject, in use of words gained on purely verbal basis, in lack of developed statements due to absence of visual impressions. Specificity of speech development is also expressed in insufficient use of non-verbal means of communication - mimic, pantomimic and intonation. This is explained by the fact that visual impairments impede their perception and hinder the use of such expressive means.

One of the important issues of the research is the one concerning the impact of child's limited abilities on his/her communication with micro social environment.

Insufficient information on the communication partner's state limits the opportunity to control behavior in children with visual impairment. This results in difficulties to communicate and complicates the process of integration. The study of children with visual impairment shows that one's own opportunities evaluation and awareness of disability starts at preschool age already. When children achieve middle and senior age, they begin to understand their difference from the normally seeing. In comparison with healthy children, the level of self-esteem in preschool children with visual impairment is lower and less stable as they do not have adequate attitude to their defect, and this impedes communication with other people. Interaction with sighted peers requires skills and abilities to work together. Experience shows that withdrawal from communication, from contact with others, orientation to one's inner world is characteristic for children with visual impairment. Many of them refuse to participate in joint games because of their weak motor preparation and insufficient mastering of actions and skills of joint activities.

Visual perception impairments lead to a unique understanding of partner's emotional states; they hamper the perception of his/her appearance, and restrict the ability to obtain information about the person's appearance. Primary schoolchildren with visual impairment have a poorer knowledge of non-verbal means of communication; they practically do not use expressive movements, gestures, facial expressions. Thus, speech for them is the most important means of communication as they catch with difficulty non-verbal manifestations of character, mood and emotional states.

Ivannikova (2004) has revealed a number of communication peculiarities in children with visual impairment in her research; they are as follows: lack of established patterns to express certain states of a person: undeveloped generalized ways to perceive non-verbal means of communication, inability to use psychomotor information, etc. Such speech forms as questions, statements and clarifications are applied to dispel concerns about the correctness of decisions taken. If a normally seeing child perceives and reflects the world around on the basis of a whole complex of sensations and representations, then falling out or breaking of such an important analyzer as visual causes mismatch between "digital and analog signals" (Ivannikova, 2004). This can make children with visual impairment interpret information that comes from adults and peers in the wrong way and, therefore, can hinder people's understanding of children with visual impairment behavior (Nichiporenko & Mendelevich, 2006). Communication of children with visual impairments primarily relies on speech opportunities, while normally seeing children actively improve communicative activity in practical and theoretical cooperation with an adult through the development of a system of verbal and non-verbal means of communication. In this connection, violations in the system of establishing communication links with surrounding people are observed (Ivannikova, 2004).

Communicative characteristics of predictive competence of a primary school student includes the ability to recognize emotional experiences and states of people, children and adults around, to express own emotions in verbal and nonverbal ways. Besides, the child has to learn to cooperate, listen and hear, and exchange information by this age. At the same time, practice shows that purposeful formation of communicative skills in primary schoolchildren often remains beyond educators' attention.

Difficulties that primary school students experience in the process of adaptation can lead to maladaptation as its most unfavorable form. One form of social maladaptation is school maladaptation manifested in discipline violations, learning activity, relationships with classmates and the teacher.

Molodtsova, Ovcharova and Stepanov (as cited in Gutkina, 2000) believe that maladaptation at school adversely affects primary school students' adaptation in other communication environments.

Undetected developmental deviations, for example, mild visual defects, can first of all, retard the rate of child's mental development, and can also contribute to the formation of secondary emotional and personal deviations in children. Hence, children often experience low self-esteem and a low level of claims.

Visual impairments can limit possibilities to obtain information from outside, change ways of communication and forecasting processes, cause difficulties of social adaptation and impoverish social experience. Reduced volume of communication results in underdevelopment of predictive competence as an important indicator of successful socialization. Children do not predict situations that may arise in forthcoming communication; they are not able to program communication and to control the process of communication according to the peculiarity of a communicative situation.

Analyses of psychological and pedagogical literature identified personality abilities that characterize the communicative function of prognostic competence. They include: the ability to predict socio-psychological situations that may arise in the impending communication; to program communication in the socio-psychological aspect considering the peculiarity of a communicative situation; to handle this process.

Thus, the analysis allowed us to assume that a low level of verbal communication in primary schoolchildren with visual impairments determines undeveloped prognostic competence and, as a result, unsuccessful process of socialization for this category of children in the given situation with further probable emergence of deviations.

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

The research goal is to study features of verbal communication in primary school students with visual impairment, to identify and explain the content of possible risks of deviation emergence.

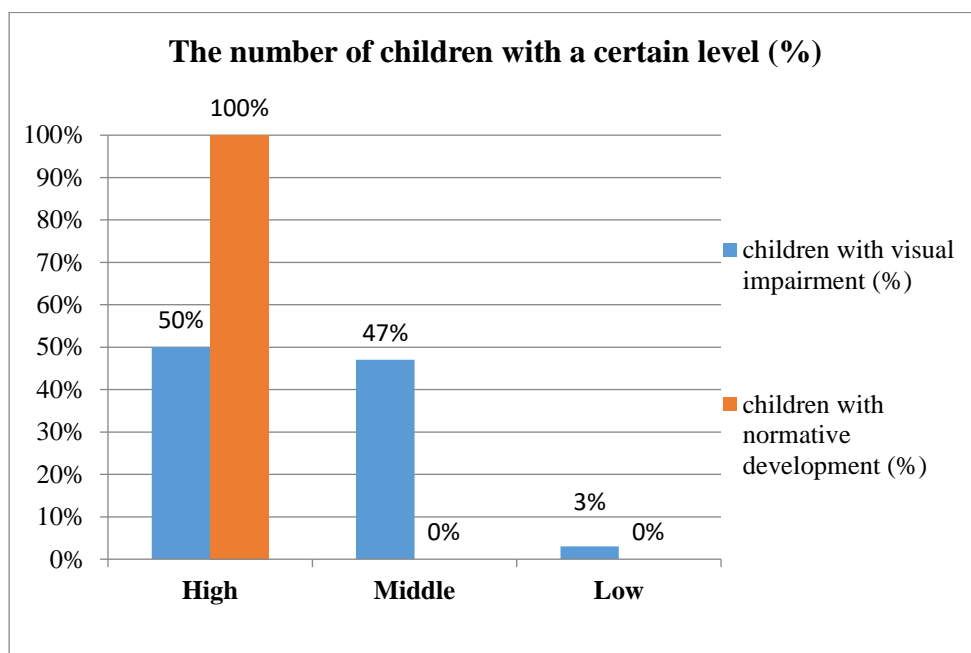
#### **5. Research Methods**

Such methods as theoretical analyses, observation, experiment, quantitative and qualitative processing of results have been applied to identify features of verbal communication in predictive activity of primary school students with visual impairment. Technique titled "Identification of communicative skills formation" was applied in the research (Cherkasova & Morgacheva, 2016). The research was conducted on the basis of SBEI "Kazan School No. 172 for Children with limited health opportunities" located in Kazan and "MBEISchool No. 8 in the town of Shumerlya. School students of 2-4 grades aged 8-10 years participated in this study. 30 students (16 boys and 14 girls) with visual impairment made the experimental group, and 30 school students (10 boys and 20 girls) without eyesight problems participated in the control group. Obtained data were processed by method of mathematical statistics the "Student's t-test" to estimate differences between the two samples.

#### **6. Findings**

Obtained research results on identification of speech forecasting peculiarities in primary school students allow to conduct comparative analyses between the two samples to specify features of

communicative characteristics in primary school students with visual impairment in comparison with peers without visual impairment.



**Figure 01.** The number of children with a certain level (%)

Research results testify that all children in the control group (100% - 30 pupils) have a high level of speech communication skills formation in the structure of predictive activity. School children possess good skills of oral monologue speech, are able to listen to the interlocutor and conduct a dialogue. School students are able to express and reason their position, to predict the result of their answer or their interlocutor's reply as they understand his/her statement. While interacting, school children are positive, active, interested in joint activity, able to settle matters with each other and to come to common decisions. All this attests to a high level of communicative characteristics and predictive skills development in the course of communication. Moreover, these indicators evidence that ability to speech forecasting arises at the age of 8-9 years.

50% (15 children) of school students with visual impairment in the experimental group exhibit a high level of task performance; thereby we can assume that in case of normal speech development primary school students with visual impairment are capable for speech forecasting. Learners are able for speech forecasting both at interaction and collaboration as well. Children can initiate and support dialogues; their statements are adequate to the communicative task. In joint activity, school children are active, capable to come to an agreement, to common opinion to achieve the goal. They overcome disputable issues independently. Besides, school children can predict the plot development using context.

47% (14 learners) of primary school students with visual impairment manifested the average level of task performance. They adequately perceive a speech situation, are capable for speech forecasting in monologues, can predict the plot development using context. These children can listen to the interlocutor but find it difficult to ask questions independently in case of interaction. They need teacher's help to

maintain dialogue. When they collaborate with peers, they are low-active, poorly initiative, demand constant stimulating help.

3% (1child) of school children has a low level. The child needed constant support and help to perform tasks. The child cannot ask questions independently in a communication situation, initiate and support dialogue, and predict the plot development using context; difficulties of motivation were identified to perform tasks. Besides, hardships to establish interpersonal contacts testify for insufficient speech forecasting development while collaborating with peers.

Therefore, it is considered that these parameters in visually impaired school students are less developed and have specific features.

## **7. Conclusion**

Analyses of obtained results suggest that speech impairments produce a negative effect on forecasting formation that further can lead to deviations in behavior in this category of children; the works of Sreckovic, Hume, and Able (2017); Mrachko and Kaczmarek (2017); Marshall, Harding, and Roulstone (2017); Sylvestre, Brisson, Lepage, Nadeau, and Deaudelin (2016); Bunning et al. (2013); Bunning, Gooch, and Johnson (2017) prove this conclusion.

Theoretical analyses showed that modern researches have not revealed features of speech communication in the sphere of predictive competence formation in primary school children with visual impairment fully; diagnostics of communicative abilities as an instrument to identify risks of deviation emergence in interpersonal relationship has not been elaborated yet. Obtained results coincide with researches of Russian scholars in which authors emphasize the importance of primary school age characterized by essential changes in child's mental processes due to a new leading kind of activity, they reflect the importance of communication to form predictive competence during this period that has a direct link with socialization process, and it is especially important in a situation of limited health opportunities (Tvardovskaya et al., 2016; Kurbanova & Tvardovskaya, 2017; Akhmetzyanova & Nigmatullina, 2017).

On the basis of earlier researches and the result of the conducted experiment, the specificity of social growing of primary school students with limited health opportunities and difficulties arising in the course of communication, interaction and adaptation in a new changed social situation is explained and reasoned.

It has been specified that speech communication in the structure of predictive activity in primary school students with visual impairment has features which are manifested in difficulties to forecast and plan communicative situations, in inability to program future communication and, respectively, in realization of a communicative plan in compliance with social norms.

Experimental data determined parameters in which indicators of the control group are higher in comparison with the experimental group data. Distinctions are noted during task performance to identify understanding of variability of speech actions, reasoning of own position, difficulty to coordinate efforts in the process of organization and implementation of collaboration. Some school students need continuous stimulation to perform tasks in the form of additional explanations, questions, motivating phrases. Therefore, it is possible to draw a conclusion that these parameters in primary school students with visual impairment are less developed and have specific features. Namely, this category of children do not have well-developed speech communication skills to forecast social and psychological situations which can arise

in forthcoming communication, to handle the process of communication in educational and out-of-school spheres when it comes to a communicative situation.

The divergence of levels of predictive competence communicative characteristics development is caused by the severity of visual impairment in children and social conditions of training and education. In general, primary and secondary defects of development are responsible for emergence of difficulties in case of task performance. Secondary defects are presented by the peculiar way of mental development and thinking that in turn negatively affects forecasting in the course of communication.

Summing up the results of our research, it is possible to tell that, in general, primary school students without visual impairment and primary school students with visual impairment cope with proposed tasks. However, we observe that primary school students with visual impairment demonstrate lower indicators of task performance than primary school students without sight pathologies.

The divergence of levels in the experimental group can be caused by differences in the severity of visual impairments in children and social conditions of their training and education. A high level of task performance by learners with visual impairment testifies to normal development of speech forecasting that, in turn, evidence mild expressiveness of their impairments and high compensatory abilities of children.

Indicators of a middle and low level task performance are generally referred to primary and secondary defects of development. Secondary defects in school children are presented by the peculiarity of mental development and individual features such as isolation, vocabulary limitation resulted in the lack of the need to interact with people around (absence of motivation to communicate), violation of purposeful activity and necessary skills of communication. It negatively affects forecasting in communication.

We have come to the conclusion that adverse social and psychological factors has a greater impact on child's personality traits formation complicating communicative interaction and communication of learners with people around and consequently cause difficulties of speech forecasting.

Proceeding from that, we can ascertain that formed ability to speech communication is a necessary condition both within the frames of educational process and personality successful socialization. It is also one of the most important ways of obtaining information on the outside world and way for verbal planning of activity. Full-fledged communicative skills in children with visual impairments will promote their best adaptation to the environment of normally developing peers.

Thus, the uniqueness of personality and communicative skills development necessitates diagnosing of school children with visual impairments to identify peculiarities and to develop remedial work for their successful adaptation in society.

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