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New technologies when teaching English to preschool learners

Abstract

The modern world rests on various technologies. There are quite many different types of equipment in education designed to facilitate the teacher's work. However, is it always a question of whether selected modern technologies are helpful in the teaching process. In this article, we want to investigate the following issues: /1/ whether interactive whiteboards and tablets support the process of teaching English to preschool children with the help of modern (i.e. non-traditional) teaching procedures; /2/ the use of various techniques of teaching English, both these recognized as traditional and the ones with the help of an interactive whiteboard and a tablet in two preschool groups; /3/ popularity of the application of specific preschool--aimed techniques when teaching English to kindergarten learners. In the final parts of this article, we conduct a detailed analysis of the results and provide conclusions.

Keywords: education, preschool children, ICT tools, traditional teaching, foreign languages

Introduction

Nowadays, the use of modern technology accompanies people in their daily lives. Moreover, modern technologies are also used in education. In this article we mainly want to focus on using modern technologies in teaching English to preschool children. Therefore, we want to investigate whether technologies such as an interactive whiteboard and/or a tablet are more effective in teaching children and developing their language acquisition than traditional teaching methods. We mainly want to focus on presenting how teaching English in kindergarten looks like, what we know about

this issue and what we have to remember about. The next step is to present various procedures used for teaching English to preschool learners when either traditional or modern methods of teaching have been applied. Finally, we would like to present the whole area of our research and the conclusions that may be drawn from it.

1. Literature review

1.1. Teaching English to very young learners - what we know and what we have to remember about?

The preschool period is one of the essential stages in a child's development. Teaching English to preschool children is a natural process these days. However, unfortunately, it is still noticed that many teachers are trying to teach small children in the same way they teach adolescents or adults. Being unable to succeed when applying this approach to children, many teachers perceive children's behaviour resulting from their natural developmental path as disobedience[1]. As a result we have a phenomenon where the teachers dissatisfied with the learning process of these children claim that it is too early to teach them. Instead of trying to make these children become familiar with the English language only, the teachers try to fill their learners' heads up with as much English as possible.

Nowadays, children learn their first foreign language in kindergartens. So the topic of teaching L2 to preschool children is vital; here, what needs to be considered We are various areas of mental, socio-emotional, and physical development of a six-year-old child - linking each of them with the forms of their L2 education, possible to be met during their English language classes. As far as their first (i.e. native) language is concerned, Kotarba-Kańczugowska[2] stresses that a six-year-old child has a rich vocabulary and can efficiently communicate with his/her peers. A child of this age likes when other children play with him/her, so s/he willingly talks about their experiences and often uses their imagination. While discussing the child's social and emotional development Kotarba-Kańczugowska[3] observes the existence of the following phenomena: /1/ understanding emotions experienced by others and themselves;

[1] H. Komorowska, *Metodyka nauczania języków obcych*, Warszawa 2009.

[2] M. Kotarba-Kańczugowska, *Sześciolatek na zajęciach z języka obcego – poradnik dla nauczycieli*, Warszawa 2014.

[3] M. Kotarba-Kańczugowska, op. cit.

/2/ being able (to a limited extent) to control his reactions; /3/ learning social rules mainly through play; /4/ willingly undertaking social activities; /5/ wishing to be accepted by peers (this feature is of great importance to them);,/6/ adaptation to new situations and requirements (what enables continuous development of their mental functions); and /6/ development of an increasing tendency to compete and be the best (six-year-old children like to be rewarded for their work).

One of the essential elements of a child's development in preschool age is cognitive development. Each child develops differently. Following both Vygotsky[4] and Piaget[5], cognitive development of a preschool child entails acquiring and improving the skills that help a child learn about the world that surrounds them. Both scholars played significant roles in the research concerning the development of preschool children, but both of them looked at it from a slightly different perspective. In contrast to Piaget's work, Vygotsky[6] focused his research on the influence of social experiences on various spheres of child's development. According to Vygotsky[7], the vital role in the child's development is played by the function of culture. Each child develops in different (sociolinguistic) culture that shapes certain spheres of their life. What the child thinks, how s/he addresses the world and the environment that surrounds them, as well as how s/he finally behaves results from the culture surrounding them and in which they develop.

An essential element in developing a child and acquiring new skills, including learning a new language, is performed by (both internal and/or external) motivation. Internal motivation is usually associated with the pleasure derived by a child from learning, curiosity about the world that surrounds them, lower level of anxiety when attending their classes. External motivation, at the same time, creates an incentive to act, either to deserve a reward or to avoid a punishment. Following Kordziński[8], such motivation is supported by specific artificially constructed systems of rewards and punishments, a set of provisions regulating children's conduct in specific situations; when positive - it consists of a perspective of better realization of their own goals; when negative - it is based on a fear that stimulates action by creating a sense of threat (e.g., making public embarrassment).

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[4] L. S. Wygotski, *Myślenie i mowa*, Warszawa 1989.

[5] J. Piaget, *Psychologia dziecka,* Wrocław 1993.

[6] L. S. Wygotski, *Myślenie i mowa*, op.cit.

[7] Ibidem.

[8] J. Kordziński, *Motywacja – tajemnica szkolnych sukcesów,* Warszawa 2007.

In kindergarten, it is the first time that children meet their teachers. For children, this is a completely new situation and often difficult for them because they do not know this person and may be afraid of what will happen to them if they stay with their teacher and peers without their mothers or fathers. Therefore, the teacher is another and essential element worth describing. As rightly observed by Szpotowicz & Szukc-Kurpaska[9], being an FL teacher requires possessing the specific knowledge (usually acquired during the studies) and a number of specific skills, necessary to work with young children. During a FL lesson a child most often uses his/her native language, being able to use the second one when expected to repeat the patterns given by the teachers. Expecting a child to use the second language by their own requires earlier construction of a situation (fully understood by the children) in which the whole dialogue is being carried out in the new language. From this perspective, such forms of (forced) communication strongly resemble theatrical performances, where the expressions supposed to be used have been earlier memorized by the actors. when it comes to using the next one.

However, it is not wrong that children make an attempt to master a second language; the younger the children, the better they are at acquiring their knowledge (communication-related knowledge included). According to Piotrowska-Skrzypek[10], the overriding goal that is being daily pursued by every kindergarten teacher, is expressed by two inseparable things, i.e. education and upbringing. Both of them exert an impact on the classroom behaviour of a kindergarten teacher when a FL is being delivered. It is through the presentation of cultural and linguistic patterns that appropriate, so-called effective language education of the child is being effected by the teacher (Malamah-Thomas[11]). Every foreign language teacher must be aware of how much it depends on her. It is crucial to analyse the competencies of a foreign language teacher at the stage of preschool teaching/learning from the perspective of a small student who is just starting his/her way at the stage of preschool education.

Nowadays, English – generally recognized as an international language - is taught to children from an early age. Therefore, acting as FL teachers of preschool children, we should be able to apply various techniques that will improve the learning process itself. A child at this age is not afraid to make linguistic mistakes, thus their learning

[9] M. Szpotowicz, M. Szulc-Kurpaska, *Teaching English to Young Learners*, Warszawa 2012.

[10] M. Piotrowska-Skrzypek, *Kompetencje nauczyciela języka obcego w przedszkoli*, „Języki obce" 2015, nr 1, s. 23-29.

[11] A. Malamah-Thomas, *Classroom Interaction*, Oxford 1988.

achievements could be observed be other children. As teachers, we should motivate our students and pay special attention to what methods, principles, or techniques we choose so that the children can assimilate the material as well as possible.

To sum up, when teaching preschool children, it is essential to remember that such children easily absorb the material. However, their motivation to learn is strongly connected with appropriate functioning of the teacher in this process. The child should be appropriately encouraged and motivated to enjoy their participation in English classes. The teacher, mostly because of her attitude to the lesson design and its further presentation, is often fully responsible of how the child perceives things.

1.2. Various methods of teaching English to preschool learners – using traditional and modern methods of teaching

This part of the article will provide a review of some traditional methods and ICT (Information and Communications Technology) in teaching English to preschool children. In this part we want to present what technologies are used in kindergartens for teaching/learning English and show different applications of some non-technological tools that have been used for years and give excellent results.

As for traditional methods of teaching English, one of the things that every kindergarten employed teacher of English uses are the so-called flashcards. Following Harmer[12], their basic application is to present and manipulate various forms of language use to involve children in activities of all kinds. These are cards/pictures with different objects or people are shown to the learners depending on the lesson's topic.

One more popular tool are songs. According to Pejic & Dzanic[13], mostly because children are extremely fond of signing, songs are thought to be examples of activities that encourage children's needs, fun content, and relaxing features that positively affect children's language. Importantly, the songs that the teacher wants to use during the classes should be appropriate to the age of the children, be attractive to them, and fit thematically to the lesson topics.

Another English teaching technique popular in kindergartens is storytelling. As observed by Gottschall14, storytelling significantly develops children's minds. It is

[12] J. Harmer, *The Practice of English Language Teaching 4th Edition*, United Kingdom 2007.

[13] A. Pejic, N. D. Dzanic, *The Effect of Using Songs On Young Learners and Their Motivation for Learning English*, "NETSOL New Trends in Social and Liberal Sciences" 2017, nr 1(2), s. 40-54.

[14] J. Gottschall, *The Storytelling Animal. How Stories Make Us Human*, Washington 2013.

well known that reading books or stories to a child has a very positive effect on their development. Stories can help understand the world around the young learners and their everyday experiences to explore or discover a new topic (or express emotions in different situations).

One more issue worth focusing upon are board games and the ways they are used for teaching English to kindergarten learners. Board games, as it is commonly known, are a common idea for spending family time together (Delage[15]). There are many of them all over the world, and they concern various areas of life, education of foreign languages included. A perfect way for a child to learn unconsciously is to play board games; the whole process of language learning occurs with practically no effort, i.e. through hands-on experience and fun. Delage[16] also enumerates many benefits of playing board games, such as discovering various aspects of the topics dealt with different problems, developing learning patterns, learning to play/think ahead, enhancing thinking skills, teamwork, learning alternate outcomes, improving memory function, and many others. Board games are sources of many positive experiences for a young child.

Currently, there have appeared a number of educational procedures where the so-called ICT tools are included. By introducing and using modern technologies, teachers need a clear understanding of the following: how the ICT tools can meet identified educational and life goals for preschool children alone or in a group; what are (more or less difficult) different functions of various ICT tools; how to monitor the child's progress and commitment; how to choose the appropriate ICT-tool based activities for these results; how the child functions individually or in a group; what are their interests/ preferences for learning and how they may react when some specific ICT tools will be used. Being aware of the existence of many different ICT tools we would like to turn attention to the two of them, the ones which are quite difficult to imagine having a well-planned lesson of English without.

When using one of the most popular ICT tool, i.e. interactive whiteboards, teachers can display whatever they want, e.g., various pictures, tasks. What is a great advantage of interactive whiteboards (IWB), one of the functions they offer is a special pen, thanks to which teachers and children can come, mark and draw everything they need. Interactive whiteboards must have access to the Internet to be connected to the

[15] E. Delage, *Playful Activities to Teach English to Very Young Children*, "The Journal of TESOL – France. 1" 1989, Vol. 9, s. 79-95.

[16] E. Delage, *Playful Activities*…, op. cit.

software or, for example, a course used by the teacher. If a textbook is used, it often also offers a version for such an interactive whiteboard. It means teachers can easily combine what their classes conduct with using IWBs where they can display the principal course assets, vocabulary, songs, animations, or tasks from this particular book.

Another ICT tool popularly used by kindergarten teachers for teaching English is a tablet. As we know, tablets are these tools many kindergarten children have at home playing games and/or performing other Internet activities. As kindergarten children are quite familiar with this equipment and many of them know how to use it to a varying degree, tablets can make the young learners immediately motivated and committed to participating in the proposed educational kindergarten activities. Despite the fact that overuse of tablets may be harmful to children's eyesight there are still a few useful ways to use this device. When talking about storytelling, for example, the teacher often first reads/tells the children the story to the children, and then we can play an audiobook with planned filmed activities that tend to accompany the text on the tablet, this time read by a native speaker.

To sum up, we should say that the use of modern technologies (both these dealt with in the paper and these not mentioned here) is useful and gives great results in the absorption of the material by students. It is vital to get to know the group and the class to choose the methods, techniques, and materials (equipment) that one can use. Actually, there is no way to avoid modern technologies when planning FL lesson nowadays. The world keeps developing what makes all (educational) technology to move forward. Modern language teachers must be prepared for these inevitable changes to come.

2. Research

This part contains the main research question, posed by us to guide the whole research together with three research hypotheses that are based on the interest in the research area. Further we describe the population we intended to conduct the research, as well as the methods and tools of the research. The ultimate part of this chapter contains details of the entire procedure followed to obtain the results and answers on a given topic.

Currently, the issue of the application of modern technologies in kindergarten lessons (language lessons included) is very extensive. On the one hand, the use of modern technology by kindergarten teachers necessitates to answer the question whether the needs thrusted upon them could make them search for the ways of teaching that

may not only be approved by preschool children, but also by their parents. On the other however, there is still a question whether such teachers will not force themselves to reach for interactive whiteboards and/or tablets, believing that these tools are not really necessary at this stage of introduction of the language. In other words, what needs to be established is whether (and if yes, why) kindergarten teachers should discover the necessity of the application of ICT tools during their lessons or whether such a situation does not really occur and the majority of kindergarten teachers still delivers English with the help of traditional non-ICT equipment. Thus, the main goal of the research aims to establish if the application of interactive whiteboards and tablets makes FL teaching more effective among preschool children then traditional methods of teaching.

The main research thesis has been thus established as follows: The application of an IWB and/or a tablet has been recognised as being more useful in enhancing English acquisition among preschool children when compared to traditional methods. It is hypothesised that using interactive whiteboards and tablets makes English acquisition more useful among preschool children than traditional methods of teaching. Additionally, as if on the basis of the above hypothesis, we posed three additional hypotheses to carry out the research in a specific way. These are: /1/ Interactive whiteboards and tablets enhance the acquisition of English among preschool children more effectively than the traditional methods. /2/ There is an increase in the acquisition of English while employing the storytelling method enhanced with technological tools as compared to the traditional implementation of thereof. And /3/ There is an increase in the acquisition of English while employing games enhanced with technology as compared to the traditional implementation of thereof.

Two of these additional hypotheses extend the topic under study. We want to check not only whether the use of an IWB and/or a tablet is more effective in teaching English to children. When getting deeper into the topic, we thought it should be necessary to also add the lesson contents to expand the research, such as the use of storytelling and/or various interactive games. More specifically, we want to check if a story when told by the teacher, differs from the same story when presented to the children with the help of the tablet. Is there any difference in learning the vocabulary and phrases from the story? One more issue concerns the games introduced to children with the help of an interactive whiteboard and the same board games used as traditional teaching methods, i.e. without the application of modern technologies. Will the use of modern technologies in these two aspects give better results or not?

The research is carried out in a public preschool located in a small village in the south of Poland. The study participants are the two groups of preschool children aged 6. Each of the two groups contains 25 children. Both groups are taught English by the same teacher who will also conduct the study.

In order to collect the answers to the research questions as well as to come out with the ultimate conclusions, a mixed (i.e. both qualitative and quantitative) research methods were chosen as the best-suited approach to the data collection. It was planned to carry out an empirical experiments as well as a poll. This way of data analysis was hoped to give a possibility to understand the issue from a wider perspective and at the same time to analyse the collected evidence without omitting relevant details. The data was collected in a public kindergarten within the period of two months, i.e. from February till the end of March. The research began with a short oral informative pre-test to test the scope of children's knowledge on given topics, including vocabulary and various phrases that will be taught over the next two months using an interactive whiteboard and traditional methods. After the pre-test, the teacher should teach two selected groups for four weeks, making them become knowledgeable on the one selected topic. The first group will be taught in the traditional way and the second with the use of the two, specified above, ICT tools. At the end of February, the teacher will do a revision and a short mid-test to check the results for storytelling in both groups. For the next four weeks, the teacher will teach a different topic, i.e. vocabulary and various phrases related to the topic: Clothes. During the whole process of education, the teacher will use different types of games, to check whether they are equally effective in an interactive or traditional way. After conducting the research, the teacher, should collect the data with the help of final oral test, would check it carefully and make a thorough analysis in both groups. All the tests will be recorded and scripted.

3. Findings

This part of the article covers the practical approach to investigating whether selected modern technology (interactive whiteboards and tablets) make FL teaching more effective among preschool children than traditional teaching methods. It was hypothesised that using interactive whiteboards and tablets improves the process of teaching young children, i.e. whether children will be more willing to participate in the classes and whether this form of FL education will affect their involvement and development.

The research was carried out on two groups of children aged six. The learning process of children at this age is influenced by many factors, one of them being the appropriate motivation and natural task-involvement resulting from it. The issues that needed to be assessed were not only whether the application of IWBs and/or tablets could positively influence the motivation of such young learners, but also whether this motivation would appear since these learners had been bought up in the atmosphere of everyday application of different ICT tools. Additionally we also wanted to find out whether kindergarten teachers of English are familiar with the use of IWBs and tablets in their everyday didactic procedures or whether it is traditional (i.e. non-ICT-related) procedures that are more popular among such learners. Finally, we were interested in the process of English vocabulary retention among these learners trying to assess whether the application of selected new technology tools helps in the process of foreign vocabulary learning in respect of such young learners.

As the kindergarten learners that were to take part in the experiment were not beginners (they had their meetings with English last year, when they were five years old as well), we decided it should be necessary to establish the current level of knowledge in the two groups before the process of teaching English in two different ways has begun. Likewise, when the experiment has been completed, a similar step aimed at the establishment of the results should be made. That is why, with the help of a short oral pre-test and a post-test, the current and the final results should be found in both groups. Additionally, specially designed observation sheets of the lessons delivered to the learners have been formatted to be filled up during the observation processes carried out by us.

Another aspect of this particular study should be to check the correlation between the level of motivation in the control group, and the experimental group, as well as whether the use of the teaching procedure (such as the application of storytelling and board/interactive games) could help the learners better remember the new words.

The results of this study are to be presented in the form of three separate sub-chapters, where the first and second one will be devoted to a statistical and numerical analysis of the two tests; pre-test and post-test. The last one will provide the results of the observation sheets and the conversation which took place during individual conversation with each child. We will attempt to briefly analyse the research data and confirm or reject the hypothesis stated for the study.

Before teaching a given scope of the material, the teacher conducted a pre-test. This test was performed in both the control and experimental groups. There were 25 children in each group, i.e. 50 pre-tests were performed. When creating a pre-test, the teacher divided it into two sections related to family and clothes. For the entire pre-test, the child could get 60 points. The results were used to determine how children from both groups know the given vocabulary and phrases. Below we can see a chart (Figure 1) with the results of children from both groups.

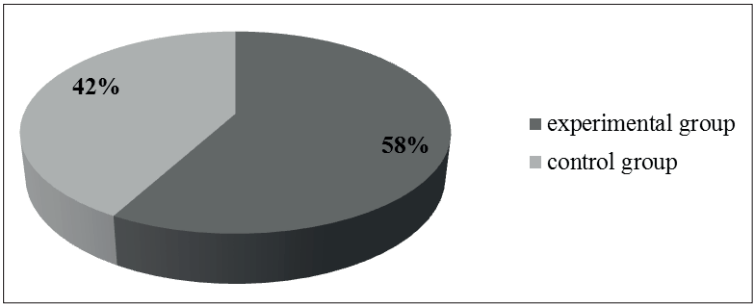

Figure 1. The percentage score of the pre-test.

On the chart, we can precisely see that both groups performed very similarly in the given pre-test. All-together, the control group gained 48%, whereas the experimental group score was 52%, which shows that both groups are on a similar level. The results indicate that the learners belonging to the two groups represent a very similar level of vocabulary knowledge in respect to the two topics (*Family* and *Clothes*) they dealt with last year.

After a period of two months in which the teacher taught the same material topics (*Classroom pieces* and *Home equipment*) to the children from both groups (the experimental one with the equipment of ICT tools and the control one without this equipment) a post-test was conducted. The post-test results showed a difference (Figure 2), as the experimental group evidently scored higher when compared with the results of the control group. Thus, we can say that the experiment showed many differences between the methods of conducting the activities in both groups. Moreover, the results of both groups, which differ significantly from each other, showed that the application of ICT tools matters in the process of vocabulary presentation to such small learners as well.

Both pre- and post-experiment tests were constructed in the way possible to be followed by each pre-schooler taking part in the experiment. Not only they were given pictures representing each of the items to be named by them but also the tests had the tenor of fun activity. The questions that were asked were formulated to be as understandable as possible for children for whom English is the language they learn. The teacher interviewed each child individually to obtain different information. Initially, we noticed that not all children were willing to engage in such conversations because they felt a bit stressed, but this feeling was soon overcome due to the atmosphere of fun that was introduced by us.

While checking the two groups, board/interactive games were applied, depending on the form of teaching effected in a given group during the experiment. When it comes to using the interactive board in the experimental group to conduct various online games on it to better repeat topical vocabulary, it was found that as many as 89% of children remembered all new words related to home equipment and the application of the principal pieces of furniture to be found in the rooms. When the same activity was performed in eh control group it was found that only 34% of the children provided correct answers while playing board games. Another worth mentioning fact was that the experimental group learners were far more eager to perform their online game activities, in contrast to the level of eagerness generally observed within control group members; if something did not work out for them, they either needed far more time to finally arrive at the correct answer or - in some cases - gave up, not knowing what to do.

When assessing the atmosphere of involvement to be found in the two groups, children from the experimental group were much more likely to answer the questions asked during the lessons, whereas the control group learners often either did not want to answer the questions or answered them in a far less certain and vehement way. This shows that the levels of motivation differed in the two groups; the amount of motivation found within the experimental group members was much higher than the same amount detected within the learners belonging to the control group.

As for the details of our analysis, we want to focus mainly on the most significant factors that result from the conducted research. Above are presented the results for both the control and experimental group. Currently, we would like to present the results achieved by each of the groups separately.

Beginning with the control group, it consisted of 25 children aged six. After the pre-test, the teacher collected all the results recorded on the mobile voice recorded and made a detailed analysis. The children could score 60 points from the entire test. However, it was found that most of them scored up to 11 points, which means that 97% did not know the given vocabulary and phrases completely. The results came out at a very low level. As for the first topic they dealt with last year, i.e. *Family*, most of the children knew the words *baby, mummy*, while others were difficult for them. They were also able to answer the question concerning their mothers' names most of the children, (as many as 86%) answered the question incorrectly. Similar result were found in respect to the second topic, i.e. *Clothes*.

Subsequently, the teacher wanted to familiarize the group with the vocabulary related with class furniture (in February), and house equipment (in March). It is worth mentioning that no significant changes were observed in the children as for the growth of their involvement in the participation in the classes. They often wanted to take part in the lessons right after they had been announced a story would be told to them or a board/activity game based on the vocabulary they could find in the story would re-used, but soon their enthusiasm weakened; there was observed evident lack of interest, e.g. in presenting a given story with a book, many of the children sitting in the rear were not interested, or they were pushing their way forward, which confused other children.

As for the experimental group, it also consisted of 25 six-years old children. Before starting the experiment, the teacher conducted the same pre-test as in the control group to test the children's vocabulary connected with the two topics they had been presented last year. The results we found were not different from these of the control group - most of the children did not know the given vocabulary. One more time, the two most familiar names for them were *mummy* or *baby* what meant that, on average, they scored no more than 12 points out of 60 possible. The children did not know the vocabulary and phrases from a given subject area at all. After the pre-test, the teacher started teaching the children two topics related to the classroom furniture (in February) and house equipment (in March). In conducting the classes, the interactive whiteboard and tablets were used most of the time. Each child had a table on which they could draw the pictures related to the topics dealt with or play interactive games based on the vocabulary defining each of the topics. They were also expected to use the IBWs to demonstrate their vocabulary knowledge of each of the two topics. When singing good morning and good bye songs, they could listen to the songs sung

by native speaking children from GB and sing each of the songs with them. Additionally, it has to be mentioned that the level of enthusiasm in the participation in such lessons was evidently higher. At the beginning, i.e. when the experiment began and the teacher brought tablets to the lessons to hand them to each pre-schooler together with the instruction how to operate the tablets, the children appeared to be surprised, as they did not realize tablets could be used to serve the educational purposes. Later on, however, they demanded the use of the tablets during the classes and seemed evidently displeased when they could not look at the pictures given to them in this way.

After two months of teaching, a post-test was administered. The test showed a significant increase in the vocabulary and phrases acquired by children. As many as 85% of them achieved very good results. The children willingly took part in the conversation with the teacher. When asked about pieces of classroom furniture, almost 95% of them knew all the words mentioned during the test. When it comes to the next question about the house equipment, only two children did not how to answer it. The picture with the kitchen furniture shown by the teacher was no longer a problem for most of the children. More than a half of the group, as many as 67%, scored the maximum number of points. In response, the children often mentioned the interactive whiteboard, what the picture looked like, what the sound was, etc. The situation was similar for learning new verbs, the activities performed by particular family members using the kitchen. As many as 75% of the group mentioned all the words. After analysing both tests in the experimental group, we can see a huge increase in knowledge of the new vocabulary. What is essential is the fact that the children were very eager to take part in the activities. They were very curious about what would happen and what they could see and observe on the interactive whiteboard and the tablets. After two months, the teacher noticed a significantly greater interest in the topic. For children, it was something completely new but still very interesting.

One more issue we wanted to investigate was a question concerning the popularity of the application of specific teaching procedures when organizing classes for preschool learners regardless of the nature of technique. Following the suggestions specified by selected scholars dealing with preschool education (Gondova[17]; Szpotowicz & Szulc-Kurpaska[18]; Pinter[19]; Cameron[20]) we prepared an online questionnaire

[17] D. Gondova, *Taking First Steps in Teaching English: Teaching Skills,* Zilina 2013.
[18] M. Szpotowicz, M. Szulc-Kurpaska, *Teaching English to Young Learners*, Warszawa 2012.
[19] A. Pinter, *Teaching Young Language Learners*, Oxford 2006.
[20] L. Cameron, *Teaching Languages to Young Learners*, Cambridge 2001.

and asked anonymous preschool teachers to participate in it if only they thought it could be a good idea so send back their answers. In this way we received 107 completed answers which were later analysed so as to draw appropriate conclusions on the grounds of the information found there. As the language of the questionnaire was English and the poll itself had an online character we were not able to decide whether the answers came from Poland or abroad. The results of the questionnaire are presented in the table (Table 1) below.

Table 1. The application of different teaching procedures in the lessons with preschool learners (in %)

Teaching procedures		Teaching seniority (in years)			
	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	20+
Songs	40	24	20	8	4
Nursery rhymes	26	26	14	16	18
Plays & games	45	21	13	11	10
Puppets	34	32	0	14	4
Storyteling	14	0	24	39	27
Flashcards/pictures	14	17	29	21	19
IWB activities	39	28	23	10	0
Other ICT tools	35	33	23	9	0

Source: own elaboration.

The results of the questionnaire show that the most popular teaching techniques when teaching preschool learners remain songs and plays and games, mostly because one of the key elements of such activities is movement. Average popularity is also ascribed to puppets and IWB activities. Flashcards and nursery rhymes have been used as a teaching procedure regardless of the teaching seniority, what cannot be said about some relatively modern activities such a storytelling/story-reading, the application of interactive whiteboards or the use of other ICT tools. One could also see that interactive activities are far more popular among younger teachers what cannot be said about teachers with longer teaching activity who either indicate mild interest in the use of such tools or even report they do not apply them at all. Generally, it could be seen that some traditional classroom equipment (such as flashcards or puppets) has remained popular regardless of teaching seniority of the teachers, what cannot be said about a few other traditionally used teaching instruments/techniques. Songs,

for example, have been reported as highly popular among younger teachers with sudden drop in popularity among the teachers indicating longer teaching seniority. Similar situation can be found in the use of puppets; they are quite popular as teaching instruments among teachers with shorter teaching seniority (up to 10 years of kindergarten teaching) with sudden drop in popularity among teachers reporting longer teaching seniority. As for storytelling, it is interesting to see that its popularity among young teachers is quite mild, but it grows up in the groups of older teachers (being the most popular among teachers with teaching popularity longer than 15 years of work).

4. Conclusions

By carrying out this research, we wanted to find out whether the use of selected modern technologies (such as the interactive whiteboard and/or tablet) allows to achieve a better impact on the preschool children's FL teaching processes than traditional teaching methods. Assuming that modern technologies have to influence the process of foreign language education we wanted to discover whether this situation could refer to teaching preschool learners as well. While splitting the experiment participants into two groups: control and experimental, we wanted to observe the learners' reactions to the teaching processes and the situations they had to face. In the control group the children knew what could happen as the traditional way of lesson handling was based upon the routinely organized processes with practically no change of the lesson course. The average level of learners' motivation and lesson involvement could be easily anticipated; they were evidently less interested in the lesson in the moments the activities assessed by them as 'known' were to occur, with much more enthusiasm being observed when the elements they liked and approved of were to happen. In contrast, in the experimental group, when the interactive whiteboard and the tablets had been introduced, in average the learners' reactions were either unknown, or very difficult to estimate. They were evidently forced to be more attentive as the tasks they had to participate in required them to be constantly involved so as to solve them satisfactorily. This is why it was found necessary to offer them the tasks that could not be longer than ten minutes at most with sudden change of the teaching climate after their completion. Thus, they were requested to sing a song that required body movement and/or performance of physical activities or certain games in which they had to change their places. Such lessons were found to be completely new for the children; the use of popular modern technology tools appeared to be very significant

for the class. The children were more likely to participate in the classes; it was noticed the children presented great progress in learning new vocabulary and adjacent topical phrases. Not only were they curious what would happen in the next classes but also remembered the previous ones very well.

Evidently such lessons require a very detailed preparation on the side of the teacher with many variants to be possibly applied when some other forms appear too demanding. The teacher should constantly observe the learners, drawing quick conclusions signalled by their behaviour. In such moments she should decide whether the activity the learners have been performing appears to be too demanding for the learners (and they should be helped in some way), or whether some other new form of activity should be introduced to replace the old one. What is a significant factor is that the teacher cannot use one ICT-based task for a longer period of time, expecting the learners to work individually over it, because this will have a negative effect on their education. Preschool children expect many changes to occur in their education and a sound, open and creative mind of the teacher, who should react instantly once some unexpected and unwanted problems have occurred.

The results suggest that there should be more opportunity to use modern technology in English classes. This has a very positive effect on the development of young children. It also significantly influences their level of motivation. However, as we can see from the collected data, many public kindergartens are not equipped with the appropriate equipment. When conducting the study we discovered only one kindergarten classroom equipped with an interactive board; the result was the FL teacher was forced to change rooms and ask other teachers to move to the rooms where no interactive equipment was mounted.

Another commonly observed obstacle in using modern technologies is a low (or even very low) level of teachers' knowledge of using such equipment. Teachers do not want to participated in the courses that could equip then with appropriate technical knowledge as most of such courses/webinars have to be paid for and the institutions that employ them lack money to pay for such courses. This is probably why teachers with longer teaching seniority are not interested in the application of various ICT tools when delivering their FL lessons. As such a way of FL education goes against the commonly observed trends of language teaching, such teachers are evidently less effective (and less liked) by the learners. They have to become more aware that modern technologies have already found their place in education, FL education included. Thus, they should try to introduce modern equipment into their lessons as much as

it is only possible. When their learners leave kindergarten classrooms and begin their school education, the use of different ICT tools would become a topic of the day, lessons of foreign language included.

This study shows that ultimate success in teaching a foreign language is mainly attained by these FL teachers who use (introduce) different modern technologies in their lessons, even if their learners are preschool children. The application of such popular ICT tools as an interactive whiteboard and a tablet not only exerts a very positive effect on their acquisition of new vocabulary and phrases, but also has a positive impact on their motivation to participate in classes. Additionally, teachers can also encourage children's parents to continue working with their children at home to use English to become a normal activity for the child. Even if the children's parents cannot speak English, they can always switch on some fairy tales in English at home.

In conclusion, we want to write that the results and analyses we have carried in this article should hopefully benefit kindergarten teachers who teach English to young children and possibly their headmasters/mistresses as well. As we know, teaching is not as simple as it may seem. It seems evident teachers should constantly expand their knowledge on various topics related to their profession. Modern technologies and their presence in today's education are precisely such an aspect. The world is constantly moving forward, and we, as teachers, must develop our skills to help our children acquire new skills and abilities, knowing how to influence their individual development and upgrade their motivation.

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Nowe technologie w nauce języka angielskiego uczących się w przedszkolu

Streszczenie

Współczesny świat opiera się na wielu różnorodnych technologiach. W oświacie istnieje dość dużo różnego rodzaju urządzeń, które mają za zadanie ułatwić pracę nauczyciela. Zawsze jednak pojawia się pytanie, czy wybrane nowoczesne technologie są pomocne w procesie nauczania? W artykule chcemy zbadać następujące zagadnienia: /1/ sposób, w jaki tablice i tablety interaktywne mogą wspomagać proces nauczania języka angielskiego dzieci w wieku przedszkolnym przy pomocy nowoczesnych (tj. nietradycyjnych) procedur nauczania; /2/ wykorzystanie różnych technik nauczania języka angielskiego, zarówno tych uznawanych za tradycyjne, jak i tych z wykorzystaniem tablicy interaktywnej i tabletu w dwóch grupach przedszkolnych; /3/ popularność stosowania specyficznych technik przeznaczonych dla przedszkolaków w nauczaniu języka angielskiego dzieci w wieku przedszkolnym. W końcowej części artykułu przeprowadzamy szczegółową analizę wyników i przedstawiamy wnioski.

Słowa kluczowe: edukacja, dzieci w wieku przedszkolnym, narzędzia ICT, nauczanie tradycyjne, języki obce