



Argumentation Skills Development at the Rhetoric Lessons

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- **The research objective** is to reveal the effective ways and means of argumentation skills development at the Rhetoric lessons

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- This research has two **methodologic sources**. The first one includes **Jean Piaget's** ideas about the role of cooperation in the child's intellectual development and works by A.-N. Perre-Clemont, T.Zittun, B.Schwarz and others. The second source comprises cultural-historical theory by Lev Vygotsky, the theory of developmental education by Daniel Elkonin & Vasily Davydov, mental action theory by Peter Galperin, theoretical and experimental works of Galina Tsukerman

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■ **The research hypothesis:**

Argumentation, the need for which is arisen from the contradiction and conflict between the child's own position and the position of a group or of an opponent, will stimulate child's intellectual development, i.e. it will help children to move over from simple fantasy formation through egocentric attitudes to objective stand in the solving of the problem set.



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The research tasks are:

- to review the current methods of teaching Rhetoric;
- to study the possibilities of setting up a dialogue in the process of teaching Rhetoric;
- to analyze the theoretical approaches to studying the argumentation as a form of social interaction in the educational process;
- to work out the teaching technique of arguments based on the reasoning during discussion.

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The research was carried out at Moscow Art School for Children named after M.A. Balakirev. The participants were children from 7 to 10 years of age.

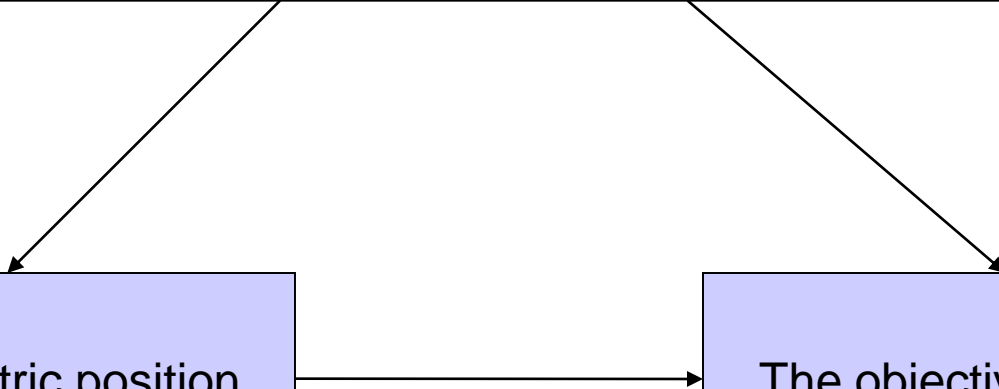


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There are **two units of an analysis** used in the research

The egocentric position

The objective position





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The method of ‘debates’ was used. ‘Debates’ is a role game that represents certain form of discussion based on strict rules. The teams, participating in ‘debates’, must view a certain disputable issue from opposite points of view.



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The fragment of one of experimental lessons:

The topic of the debates was “City Ecology: the concern of each resident and of special organizations?”

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The children were divided into two groups



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- *Arthur, 10 years, “+”: “I think that the city ecology is the concern of each resident because special organizations may sometimes not see all the litter that people leave behind in fences, under benches and other places that are difficult to reach. For me it is easier to pick up this sweet wrapper and throw it away when I’m walking past it than to wait for some special people with their machines. That is why I think that the residents should deal with garbage and litter. It’s just easier”.*
- *Masha, 9 years, “-”: “And how do you know may be a man will be able to build such perfect machines so they will make it possible to remove rubbish even in the places that are difficult to reach?”*
- *Arthur, 10 years, “+”: “People throw sweet wrappers down every day, pollute rivers, lakes, the air. No super machines will be enough”*
- *Vlad, 9 years, “-”: “Then how one man will be able to struggle with such huge pollution so well on his own?”*
- *Arthur, 10 years, “+”: “I think that if the government starts to create special organizations, to buy machines, to construct buildings for these organizations, to hire employees then in 20 years the country will either become bankrupt or it will stop providing medical care, education and safety for its people as all the funds will be given to support such organizations. Finally people will lose their jobs. Isn’t it better to impose a duty on each person to preserve the nature around him/her?”*

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- *The following dialogue may be represented as follows:*

Speech 1

Arthur	Thesis	<i>The city ecology is the concern of each resident</i>
	Argument	<i>For me it is easier to pick it up and throw it away than to call for some specialists</i>

Speech 2

Arthur	Thesis	<i>Special machines will never be able to cope with the pollution</i>
	Argument	<i>The environment is being polluted at very high rates</i>

Speech 3

Arthur	Thesis	<i>It's better to obligate each person to preserve nature</i>
	Argument	<i>Supporting of <u>special organizations</u> is more likely to bring the government to bankruptcy than to cleaning up the environment.</i>



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If we observe how children use arguments from the point of view of Rhetoric and Oratory Skills we can say that pupils can formulate their arguments logically and correctly only then when they reach the level of objective position in their own reasoning.