

## SOME METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF TEACHING THE MOTHER TONGUE TO CHILDREN OF PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE

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**Abstract:** This article explores key methodological aspects of teaching the mother tongue to children at the primary school level. It examines the psycholinguistic foundations of early language acquisition, developmentally appropriate instructional approaches, and the integration of communicative, cognitive, and ethical objectives. Special attention is given to interdisciplinary teaching, the role of literary texts in fostering both linguistic and moral growth, and the teacher's function as both a language model and motivator. The article also considers the challenges of multilingual environments and offers practical strategies for maintaining mother tongue fluency in the context of linguistic diversity. Methodological recommendations are illustrated through contemporary educational practices and supported by relevant research.

**Keywords:** mother tongue instruction, primary education, language pedagogy, psycholinguistics, literary texts, interdisciplinary approach, multilingualism, teacher's role, language acquisition

### INTRODUCTION

The acquisition of the mother tongue during the early years of formal education plays a fundamental role in the cognitive, emotional, and social development of a child. Primary school age—typically between 6 and 10 years—is a critical period for language learning, during which the foundation for future linguistic competence, literacy, and thinking skills is laid. Teaching the mother tongue at this stage requires not only knowledge of linguistic structures but also deep understanding of age-specific psychological and pedagogical needs.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Understanding the age-specific characteristics of children is a prerequisite for designing effective language instruction. At primary school age, children:

- Are transitioning from oral to written modes of communication;
- Possess a high level of curiosity and are receptive to new linguistic patterns;
- Develop the ability to differentiate phonetic and grammatical forms;
- Exhibit egocentric tendencies that affect their communication strategies;
- Begin forming metalinguistic awareness, allowing them to reflect on language itself.

Psycholinguistically, this stage is marked by rapid vocabulary expansion, growing syntactic complexity, and the emergence of literacy-related skills such as decoding and text comprehension. These developmental traits must guide the choice of teaching methods, materials, and assessment tools.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teaching the mother tongue today requires the integration of traditional and modern resources. Print materials like textbooks, workbooks, storybooks, and flashcards remain essential, but digital tools offer enhanced possibilities:

- Interactive whiteboards and smart apps allow for visual and kinesthetic engagement;
- Audio-visual materials support pronunciation and listening comprehension;
- Digital storytelling platforms foster creativity and multi-literacy skills;
- Language learning games boost motivation and retention through gamified content.

The key is not technology for its own sake, but its meaningful use to enrich the learning process and meet diverse learner needs.

In recent years, the field of language pedagogy has increasingly recognized the value of interdisciplinary integration in the teaching of the mother tongue, especially at the primary level. Language is no longer viewed in isolation but as a medium through which other types of knowledge—scientific, moral, historical, and aesthetic—are constructed and expressed. As such, mother tongue education must adopt a more holistic character that incorporates elements from various subjects and spheres of life [1].

For example, when teaching a narrative text, children can be encouraged not only to understand the vocabulary and sentence structure but also to reflect on the ethical dilemmas within the story, connect the events to historical facts, or express them through drawing and dramatization. This interdisciplinary connection enhances language retention, promotes critical thinking, and situates linguistic learning within a broader educational context.

Moreover, project-based learning—an increasingly popular approach—can serve as a tool for integrating the mother tongue with other school subjects. For instance, students may work on a project titled “My Family Tree”, which requires interviewing relatives (oral language), writing reports (written language), and presenting findings (speaking skills), all of which reinforce different language competencies in meaningful contexts.

In many regions, including Central Asia, children grow up in multilingual environments, where exposure to the mother tongue competes with the influence of other dominant or regional languages. This presents both opportunities and challenges for language educators.

One of the main issues is language interference, where structures, vocabulary, or pronunciation from a second language (e.g., Russian or English) begin to influence the child's use of the mother tongue. This can result in hybrid language use, code-switching, or even loss of fluency in the native language. To mitigate such effects, it is essential to [2]:

Foster a strong emotional and cultural connection with the mother tongue by incorporating folk tales, national songs, and traditional expressions into lessons;

Provide authentic communicative contexts for the mother tongue, such as class discussions, creative writing, and storytelling;

Implement contrastive analysis techniques, which help students recognize structural differences between languages and strengthen metalinguistic awareness;

Promote the status of the mother tongue through school-wide language policies and cultural events that emphasize its value and richness.

Furthermore, training teachers in bilingual education strategies can significantly improve the quality of instruction, particularly in communities where the mother tongue is underrepresented in public life.

Literary texts—especially those written for children—play a vital role in mother tongue education. They serve not only as vehicles for vocabulary and grammar acquisition but also as powerful tools for cultivating imagination, empathy, and moral reasoning [3].

At the primary level, age-appropriate literature such as fables, short stories, legends, and poetry should be an integral part of the curriculum. These texts help children to:

Learn language in context, with attention to rhythm, rhyme, and figurative expressions;

Explore social and ethical themes, such as honesty, friendship, and responsibility;

Develop narrative skills through story retelling, creative continuation, or dramatization;

Internalize cultural values encoded in language, proverbs, and symbolic imagery.

For example, Uzbek literature for children offers rich opportunities to explore metaphorical language and national identity. Texts by authors like Abdulla Qodiriy, Gʻafur Gʻulom, or Xudoyberdi Toʻxtaboyev can be used to introduce moral reflection alongside linguistic tasks.

In English-speaking contexts, classic children's literature—like *The Wind in the Willows* or *Charlotte's Web*—serves similar purposes. Language teachers should be trained not only to analyze such texts linguistically but also to facilitate meaningful dialogue about their ethical and emotional content [4].

One often overlooked aspect of mother tongue education is the teacher's own linguistic performance. At the primary level, the teacher is not only a source of knowledge but also the most immediate and influential language model for the child.

### CONCLUSION

The methodological aspects of teaching the mother tongue at the primary school level are diverse and interconnected. To ensure effective learning, educators must go beyond mechanical instruction and cultivate a rich, responsive, and inclusive language environment. This involves acknowledging the child's developmental stage, addressing sociolinguistic realities, drawing on the power of literature, and recognizing the central role of the teacher. As education systems evolve, so too must mother tongue pedagogy—adopting new insights while remaining rooted in the cultural and humanistic values that language inherently conveys.

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