

# THE LINGUODIDACTIC AND METHODOLOGICAL FUNCTIONS OF DEVELOPING INDEPENDENT AND INSTRUCTIONAL ASSIGNMENTS IN IMPROVING THE CONTENT OF NATIVE LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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## ABSTRACT

The article examines the current state and future prospects of implementing the credit-modular system in philological education, with a focus on developing students' independent learning assignments. It substantiates the importance of organizing the higher education process based on advanced international experience, emphasizing key principles such as learner-centeredness, recognition of learning outcomes, academic mobility, and the accumulation of credits. The study highlights the significance of allowing students to design their own learning trajectories and of introducing a transparent assessment system that fosters students' and professors' motivation and interest in the subject.

## Introduction

Based on international experience, the process of language acquisition is structured around the formation of four core skills: listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing. In teaching the mother tongue, however, it is advisable to apply this approach more creatively. This is because students, as native speakers of the language, already possess a certain level of linguistic competence when they enter higher

education. The main task in teaching the native language is therefore not to introduce the language anew, but to enhance and refine existing skills.

In particular, students are already capable of understanding spoken or written texts, speaking, and writing in their native language. Hence, the primary objective of native language teaching methodology is to develop their ability to comprehend spoken information correctly, to speak fluently and logically in literary language, to understand

written texts, and to write accurately and meaningfully.

In the philological fields of higher education, the implementation of the modular-credit system has increased the emphasis on independent learning assignments. In accordance with state educational standards and national assessment criteria, it is essential to critically examine the content of independent learning tasks, questions, and exercises in native language instruction, and to classify them from the perspective of developing and assessing linguistic competence.

Traditional lessons in higher education — particularly for future specialists — have often focused on memorizing information and performing linguistic analysis of sentences taken from various sources. This approach no longer meets the needs of the modern era, as today's world requires individuals who can think independently and solve real-life problems creatively.

In this regard, problem-based learning technology has been introduced in pedagogy. In problem-based learning, knowledge is not provided in a ready-made form; rather, the teacher poses a problematic question or task and guides students in finding solutions. Thus, questions and assignments play a key role in this process. Exercises, on the other hand, involve repeated intellectual or practical actions aimed at mastering or improving a skill — they also have a defined role within this system.

Improved independent learning and instructional assignments should meet the following psychological and pedagogical objectives of problem-based education:

- To develop students' thinking and creative abilities;

- To enable students to acquire and retain knowledge and skills gained through independent inquiry and problem-solving more effectively than through traditional lessons;
- To nurture active and creative individuals who can identify, formulate, and solve non-standard problems.

The problem-based learning approach has proven especially important in developing text analysis skills, which are increasingly used in native language education. Any form of text analysis can be turned into a problem-solving process through the proper design of questions and assignments. The teacher's role in this process is limited to organizing the perception and understanding of knowledge, while independent and instructional tasks serve as the main tools for encouraging student engagement, critical thinking, and progress monitoring.

In traditional native language education, the reproductive method is often used. Its characteristics include:

- Presenting knowledge to students in a ready-made form;
- Having the teacher transmit and explain information directly;
- Encouraging students to consciously understand, memorize, and reproduce the acquired knowledge.

In Central Asian countries, extensive and ongoing research has been conducted on teaching, preserving, and promoting the native language as a national value. Leading international universities and research centers — such as Muğla University (Turkey), Indiana University (USA), the Centre for Increasing Pedagogical Qualification at Manchester and Oxford Universities (UK), and Belfield Pedagogical University (Germany) — have developed

systematic approaches to speech competence development prior to professional training and to learning through text-based study (e.g., *Ulyanovsk State University*).

Similarly, institutions such as Bright Hub Education have conducted studies on challenges related to developing speech skills, while Tajik National University (Payomi Donishgoi Milliy Tochikiston) and South Kazakhstan Pedagogical University have made speech competence development a key priority in their higher education programs.

In the global education system, extensive research has been carried out on the use of interactive teaching systems (Interactive E-Learning). Prominent examples include studies at Purdue University (USA), research conducted under the UN International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), and investigations into issues of native language teaching at Baku State Pedagogical University (Azerbaijan).

These international experiences demonstrate that effective language instruction — whether for native or foreign languages — depends on the ability to integrate problem-based, interactive, and creative approaches that promote deep understanding, independent inquiry, and sustainable linguistic competence . [3.17].

#### Analysis of Literature and Methods

In recent years, a number of scientific and methodological studies have been carried out in Uzbekistan on the methods of teaching the native language (*ona tili*). For instance, linguist N. Dadajonova [15.38] promoted teaching based on the methodology of developing students' speech within the process of Uzbek language education. Similarly, linguists A. G'ulomov, M. Qodirov, M. Ernazarova, A. Bobomurodova, N. Alavuddinova, and V.

Karimjonova have conducted research on the development of independent learning tasks and methods for fostering students' creative thinking skills.

T. Yusupova explored methods for teaching the main parts of a sentence, while other scholars such as H. Ne'matov, A. G'ulomov, M. Qodirov [17.78], A. Nurmonov, A. Sobirov, B. Mengliyev, L. R. Raupova, B. To'xliev, Sh. Yusupova, T. Ziyodova, O. Oxunjonova, and D. Jumashev have contributed to the theoretical and methodological foundations of native language teaching. Many of these studies focus on the development of written and oral speech. Scholars including O. Roziqov, N. Mahmudov, R. Safarov, U. Tursunov, A. Muxtorov, Sh. Rahmatullaev, H. Alavuddinova, R. R. Sayfullaeva, B. R. Mengliyev, and L. L. Raupova are also among those who have advanced the field [6.44].

Researcher A. Bobomurodov investigated the use of *game-based independent learning tasks* in native language education. Methodologist T. Ziyadov analyzed ways to enhance students' vocabulary acquisition and examined approaches to *text analysis* in the Uzbek language curriculum. Similarly, in the Uzbek language textbook for Russian-speaking groups by K. Turdieva and G. Axmedova, the inclusion of independent learning tasks that develop *critical and creative thinking* demonstrates significant methodological value for higher education.

T. T. G'aniev studied methods of increasing students' *cognitive activity* during exercises in native language lessons, while A. Hamraev conducted research on the *design of creative activities* in native language education. He scientifically justified the principles of continuity, consistency, awareness, interconnection, and

integration in the process of developing students' intellectual potential through creative learning.

Although independent learning tasks are not yet used systematically in higher education courses, recent textbooks and teaching manuals are increasingly being designed based on such assignments. For example, H. Jamolxonov's textbook *"Modern Uzbek Literary Language"* includes questions and assignments at the end of each topic [18.78].

Before the 2000s, textbooks created for higher philological education rarely contained independent learning tasks. For example, in *"Modern Uzbek Literary Language"* by U. Tursunov, A. Muxtorov, and Sh. Rahmatullaev (1992), there were no independent or instructional assignments at all [19.88].

In current practice, students' *level of independence* is considered when completing tasks. Assignments are designed to increase knowledge through targeted exercises and to develop the ability to apply learned information in various speech situations. However, there remains a need to improve the methodology of designing independent learning and instructional tasks in native language education.

For such assignments to meet modern linguodidactic requirements, they should:

- Develop multiple speech skills simultaneously;
- Encourage conscious and structured engagement by students, following didactic sequencing;
- Enable the effective use of artificial intelligence and digital information resources for research;
- Promote efficient use of academic dictionaries and lexical tools related to the topic.

Improved independent learning assignments should align with the psychological and pedagogical goals of problem-based learning, including:

- Enhancing students' analytical and creative thinking abilities;
- Reinforcing knowledge and skills acquired through independent text analysis, ensuring they are more deeply internalized than through traditional lessons;
- Cultivating students who can identify, formulate, and solve non-standard problems — that is, nurturing active, creative personalities.

H. Ne'matov's insights remain relevant to this day:

"The main criterion for selecting knowledge in native language teaching is its usefulness and applicability in practice. Beneficial knowledge includes the ability to write correctly, think creatively, and express thoughts coherently and fluently in oral and written form according to the context of speech."

In their textbook *"Methods of Teaching the Uzbek Language,"* B. To'xliiev, M. Shamsieva, and T. Ziyodova emphasize that *"the necessary strength of mastering independent learning tasks is ensured through repetition."*

A clear example of this can be seen in the textbook *"Didactics of the Native Language"* by O. Roziqov, M. Mahmudov, B. Adizov, and A. Hamraev, published under the guidance of the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education (for bachelor's programs in Primary Education, Philology, and Native Language and Literature). The authors note that:

"The methods of performing exercises have developed historically within Uzbek traditions of thought, education, and culture.

Therefore, they are closely related to the acquisition of speech culture. The use of linguistic exercises involves mental operations such as analysis, synthesis, comparison, abstraction, and concretization.”

For example, consider an assignment from a later textbook: *Group the given words according to their meanings or structure.* In performing this task, cognitive processes such as analysis, synthesis, comparison, and concretization are employed. Thus, *linguistic exercise methods* have evolved as both a means of developing speech culture and a product of intellectual activity.

In this sense, many current questions and assignments remain focused on memorization and repetition. Yet, within the native language teaching process, independent learning tasks have opened the way to problem-based education, which ensures a shift from *mechanical execution* to *creative engagement*.

Today’s New Uzbekistan does not need mere performers — it needs individuals with creative and critical thinking. At certain stages of problem-based learning, students may not yet be able to solve problems independently, so the teacher’s role is to guide them through exploring, analyzing, and solving the problem step by step. Though initially observers, students gradually learn to overcome intellectual challenges and build problem-solving skills [7.24].

Additionally, partial inquiry-based learning is used in native language education, characterized by the following principles:

- Knowledge is not provided in a “ready-made” form but must be derived independently by students;
- The teacher does not simply transmit

knowledge but organizes opportunities for exploration through various means; – Under the teacher’s guidance, students reason independently, address cognitive problems, create and analyze problem situations, and draw conclusions, thereby acquiring conscious and lasting knowledge.

#### Results:

Independent learning tasks should form a core component of higher education textbooks and manuals. Separate academic courses on designing and applying such tasks should be introduced. Based on the subject and specialization, independent learning assignments in higher education can be classified into three main categories:

1. Independent learning and instructional tasks in *Modern Uzbek Literary Language*;
  2. Independent learning and instructional tasks in *Uzbek Language*;
  3. Independent learning and instructional tasks in *Methods of Teaching the Uzbek Language*:
1. Independent learning assignments in the subject “Modern Uzbek Literary Language.”
  2. Independent learning assignments in the subject “Uzbek Language.”
  3. Independent learning assignments in the subject “Methods of Teaching the Uzbek Language.”

In this context, the content of courses taught in the fields of *Philology* and *Uzbek Language Teaching* — such as “Modern Uzbek Literary Language” and other specialized disciplines — aims to teach the foundations of linguistic science. Therefore, independent learning assignments developed within these subjects should encourage students to think critically, compare different viewpoints, and express final conclusions independently, thereby



developing their linguistic and analytical skills.

However, the independent learning tasks in existing textbooks are largely designed for memorization and repetition, rather than for stimulating creative thought. For instance, in A. Jamolkhonov's textbook "*Modern Uzbek Literary Language*," independent learning assignments are absent; instead, the material includes only questions such as:

1. What does lexicology study?
2. What is lexicon?
3. Explain the goals and objectives of lexicology.
4. What are the types of lexicology?
5. With which branches of linguistics is lexicology connected, and why? [18.57].

Unlike these, in the modern textbook "*Modern Uzbek Language*" by Professors R. R. Sayfullaeva, B. R. Mengliyev, and L. L. Raupova, teaching relies on inquiry-based and research-oriented methods, which encourage independent and analytical thinking. For example, the section on *questions and assignments* includes:

1. Provide information about the section of morphemics.
2. Describe what a morpheme is.
3. What types of changes occur in morphemic structures?
4. What is meant by the structural classification of morphemes?
5. Express your opinion about word formation [20.134].

In this approach, students are encouraged to think creatively. The design of independent learning tasks focuses on the content, objectives, and linguodidactic approach of native language education.

Similarly, in general secondary education textbooks prepared by linguist-professors such as M. Qodirov, H.

Ne'matov, and B. Mengliyev for *Uzbek Language* in Grade 8, the inquiry-based and research (exploratory) methods are used. For example, in the section titled "*Homework*," the task requirements encourage students to engage in independent learning.

Inquiry-based learning has the following features:

- The teacher formulates the problem together with the students, and its solution is determined collaboratively during the lesson;
- Knowledge is not given directly; students acquire it independently during the process of investigation, comparing various possible answers;
- The means to achieve results are determined by the students themselves;
- The teacher's role is to manage the problem-solving process efficiently;
- The learning process is characterized by high intensity, increased motivation, and deeper understanding of the acquired knowledge.

Independent learning tasks thus form the core component of textbooks — from general education to higher education — and serve to foster creative inquiry and logical thinking among learners.

It is also necessary to address the issue of textbooks. The content of education is detailed in educational literature such as textbooks, reference books, supplementary readers, atlases, maps, collections of exercises and assignments, and workbooks.

Among these, the textbook is the primary type of educational literature — a vital source of knowledge and one of the main tools of learning for future specialists. Working with textbooks is a key component of the *oral exposition method*.

Therefore, the didactic and methodological approaches reflected in textbooks must encompass the student's

intellectual development, integrating knowledge, skills, and competencies within the framework of psychological (individual typological characteristics) and psycholinguodidactic (play, reading, labor) activities.

Modern university textbooks must be both stable and adaptable.

- *Stability* means that the textbook should have a solid foundational structure.
- *Adaptability* (mobility) ensures the ability to introduce new knowledge and skills quickly without altering the main design.

The structure of a textbook includes:

- The core text (texts of various speech styles — descriptive, narrative, and argumentative texts), and
- Supplementary components (organizational and comprehension structures).

Among these, learning tasks play a crucial role in ensuring comprehension and knowledge acquisition.

Textbooks must ensure students' conscious and active participation in the learning process and provide a complete foundation for the educational material. A modern textbook performs the following didactic functions:

- Encourages students to engage with the topic and stimulates their motivation;
- Expands students' knowledge by offering information and guidance on methods of obtaining and processing new data;
- Includes opportunities for monitoring lesson progress and outcomes, self-assessment, correction, and completion of independent learning tasks to develop essential skills.

Observations reveal that skill-building exercises, assessment-based tasks, and thought-provoking questions are largely absent — not only in the early Uzbek language textbooks published in the 1930s–1940s but also in modern ones. Under the general term *exercise*, simple recommendation-type tasks are presented. Even in higher education, *independent exercises* and *assignments* are not clearly distinguished. Students rarely engage in exercises aimed at solving their speech-related problems. Independent learning tasks are still mainly designed for memorization, and the questions do not stimulate deep thinking.

In the textbook “*Didactics of the Native Language*” by O. Roziqov, M. Maxmudov, B. Adizov, and A. Hamrayev, it is noted that orthographic exercises are organized in connection with phonetic, lexical, morphological, and syntactic phenomena of the language. Through such exercises, knowledge acquired in phonetics or morphology is reinforced, and orthographic skills are developed.

*Example:*

Assignment 6. Divide the following words into syllables and write them with hyphens: *murabbo, murabbiya, minnatdor, tashabbuskor, ziddiyat, farzand, zabardast, bahramand, tonggi, tingla, alanga, ingichka, ingramoq, mingoyoq, daryo.*

When this assignment is performed as an exercise, the knowledge gained in phonetics is strengthened, and orthographic competence is further developed. Therefore, it can be considered a phonetic-orthographic exercise.

At this point, it is necessary to pay attention to G'. Hamroev's views on the essential differences between the terms *exercise* (“mashq”), *assignment* (“topshiriq”), and *question* (“savol”), as well

as their place and importance in linguodidactics. The methodologist first refers to M. Saidov's classification of educational materials, in which learning tasks are divided into three types. Hamroev notes that teachers often confuse the concepts of *exercise*, *assignment*, and *problem* in their practice. He agrees with the opinion of Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences Asqar G'ulomov, who states that "*an exercise is both a form of learning task and a specific method of teaching.*"

Building on this, Hamroev emphasizes that an assignment is a component of an exercise, expressed mainly in its condition, and that the term *assignment* conveys a narrower meaning than *exercise*. However, unlike previous studies of independent learning tasks, he proposes that independent learning assignments should not be considered part of exercises; rather, exercises belong to the broader category of assignments. Functionally, he concludes that *assignment* is a more general and comprehensive concept than both *question* and *exercise*.

Phonetic exercises include tasks related to speech sounds, vowels and consonants, voiced and voiceless consonants, syllables and their types (open and closed), and stress patterns. *Example:*

Assignment 1. Fill in the blanks with appropriate sounds and read the words: *Darax...*, *sus...*, *g'ish...*, *qan...*, *kish...*, *pish...*, *balan...*, *do's...*, *pas...*, *monan...*, *pisand...*, *mush...*

Lexical exercises aim to teach and reinforce theoretical knowledge about word meanings, literal and figurative meanings, polysemous words, words and terms, similarities and differences between them, antonyms, synonyms, homonyms, vocabulary richness, and sources of lexical

enrichment in the Uzbek language. For example, the following task focuses on antonyms.

Discussion. When analyzing the 2012 textbook "*Methods of Teaching the Native Language*" by A. G'ulomov, M. Qodirov, M. Ernazarova, A. Bobomurodova, N. Allavutdinova, and V. Karimjonova, it was found that the independent learning tasks it contains are mainly directed toward grammatical analysis, teaching and reinforcing grammatical rules, and developing theoretical skills in morphology. Examples of such exercises and assignments are included to improve speech skills. However, a separate methodology for constructing *questions* is not provided [21.287].

For instance, in the educational game "*This Word Belongs to Us*," the teacher presents several words belonging to the noun category using a movable board or projector. Students are asked to write down abstract nouns separately and explain their meanings within a set time. *Words provided:* *kitob* (book), *baxt* (happiness), *taxt* (throne), *ozodlik* (freedom), *tinchlik* (peace), *tuyg'u* (feeling), *sumalak*, *shodlik* (joy), *chashma* (spring), *bug'doy* (wheat), *tegirmon* (mill), *muhabbat* (love), *rasm* (picture), *hurriyat* (liberty), *mardlik* (bravery), *qadriyat* (value), *sadoqat* (loyalty).

The group that identifies and explains the abstract nouns most quickly and accurately is declared the winner [21.23]. This activity is intended to motivate and engage students.

When analyzing the "*Uzbek Language*" textbook for Russian-language groups (M. Mirqosimova, Sh. Alimova, O. Zoitova, N. Umarova, 2004), it was found that *assignments* and *questions* perform similar functions. In higher education, textbooks related to a specific discipline



serve as the main tool for both teaching and learning, not only during lessons but also for self-study. In the teaching of *Modern Uzbek Literary Language* and *Uzbek Language* courses, the sections on Orthography and Orthoepy are directly related to speech skills, and their teaching aids are closely interconnected.

As G'. Hamroev correctly points out, a differentiated approach to the terms *exercise* and *assignment* is necessary. Although these terms are often used together in textbooks and manuals, they are not synonymous. Our observations show that in many long-used textbooks and teaching manuals, the two concepts are frequently confused, and one is often used in place of the other.

*Examples:*

Exercise 333. Separate the words in the given poetic line into vowels and consonants:

“Yaxshi kishi ko‘r magay yomonliq hargiz, Har kimki yomon bo‘lsa, jazo topqusidir.”

Assignment 2. Divide the sentence into attributive, complete, and adverbial phrases.

As seen from the examples, in textbooks the presentation and content of *exercises* and *independent learning assignments* do not differ significantly — in both cases, the task “separate” (*ajrating*) is given, indicating a lack of methodological distinction between the two.

The following assignment is pedagogical and methodological in nature. It is designed to help students develop vocabulary and writing skills through independent work. One of the most important requirements of native language education is to prepare future specialists to express their own thoughts independently in their professional activities [17.68].

In the textbook published in 2009, valuable recommendations are provided for

assessing students, serving as useful evaluation criteria and educational material for future specialists. When designing independent learning assignments, the following criteria should be considered:

Although the content and duration of preparatory classes are not the same, the following aspects are recommended for assessing children’s speech readiness:

Reading skills:

a) reads words fluently; b) reads syllabically; c) reads by letters (incorrect reading); d) knows many letters but cannot read; e) recognizes some letters.

Writing skills:

a) knows how to write all letters and can write words (in print or cursive); b) can write only some letters (in print or cursive); c) cannot write at all.

Phonemic analysis readiness:

a) divides words into syllables; b) distinguishes sounds within words or syllables; c) pronounces all sounds correctly; d) mispronounces some sounds (noting which ones); e) attention is paid to voice tone and diction.

Oral connected speech – Reciting poems:

a) knows and recites three or more poems with enjoyment; b) knows 1–2 poems but is shy to recite; c) cannot recite any poem from memory.

Oral connected speech – Telling fairy tales:

a) knows and can tell one or more fairy tales; b) knows a tale but struggles to retell it; c) does not know any tales and makes no effort to learn them.

Oral connected speech – Describing pictures: (“Tell what you see in the picture.”)

a) can construct a coherent story of 20 or more words and several sentences;

b) can construct 10–20 words and a

few sentences;

c) can respond coherently with up to 10 words;

d) gives short answers of 3–4 words.

The criterion for mastery is the correct reinforcement of knowledge; the necessary strength of learning is ensured through repetition. For example: Exercise 1.6: Learn the meanings of the words written in your vocabulary notebook. [16.223].

Thus, traditional questions and tasks are often limited to memorization and repetition. In contrast, problem-based learning technology facilitates a shift from mechanical performance to creative activity. Today, the New Uzbekistan needs individuals capable of creative thinking, not mere executors.

At certain stages of problem-based learning, students are not yet able to solve problems independently; therefore, the teacher guides them in exploring the problem, formulating hypotheses, and identifying solutions from start to finish. Although students may initially act as observers rather than active participants, they gradually learn to overcome cognitive difficulties.

In teaching the native language, partially inquiry-based learning is also applied. Its essence lies in the following principles:

Knowledge is not provided in a “ready-made” form; students must derive it independently.

The teacher does not simply transmit information but encourages exploration through various means.

Under the teacher’s guidance, students think independently, solve cognitive problems, create and resolve problematic situations, analyze information, draw conclusions, and as a result, acquire conscious and lasting knowledge.

Learning tasks should constitute a core component of higher education textbooks and manuals. It is necessary to introduce specialized courses on designing and applying independent learning tasks in higher education. Based on the subject and orientation of existing academic disciplines, independent learning and training tasks in higher education can be categorized into three main groups:

Independent learning and academic assignments related to the Modern Uzbek Literary Language.

Independent learning and academic assignments related to the Uzbek Language course.

Independent learning and academic assignments related to Methods of Teaching the Uzbek Language.

The goals of these tasks are to:

Promote innovative approaches in teaching the native language through independent learning and educational assignments;

Improve the system of scientific, methodological, psychological, and pedagogical support for native language instruction;

Integrate the latest achievements of Uzbek ethnolinguistics into native language education.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the main component of the newly introduced modular system in higher education is the set of independent learning and academic tasks that encourage self-directed study and assessment. It should be emphasized that the content of native language education must teach students how to solve real-life problems. Each question, task, and exercise in the native language curriculum should contribute to independent learning and provide close guidance to students.

In the higher education system, especially in the teaching of Uzbek and native languages, a pragmatic approach to designing independent learning and academic tasks proves to be effective. A major challenge in organizing independent work is to develop students' ability to study autonomously — from forming creative independence to mastering the most rational methods of acquiring knowledge.

It is essential to equip students with knowledge about the effective organization of academic and research work, various aspects of intellectual activity, scientific creativity, as well as healthy routines for nutrition and rest. Moreover, they should be trained to manage their study time efficiently and make productive use of the hours allocated for independent learning.

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