

METHODOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING STUDENTS' ACTIVE THINKING AND MENTAL SKILLS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL MOTHER TONGUE LESSONS

Shodmonqulova Dilorom Khalikovna¹, Yuldasheva Sharapat², Hayitov Anvar Isomidin ugli³

¹Candidate of Philological Sciences, Professor, Department of "Mother Tongue and Its Teaching Methodology in Primary Education", Tashkent State Pedagogical University named after Nizomiy.

²Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor, Department of "Mother Tongue and Its Teaching Methodology in Primary Education", Tashkent State Pedagogical University named after Nizomiy.

³Senior Lecturer, Department of "Primary Education Pedagogy", Tashkent State Pedagogical University named after Nizomiy.

DOI: 10.63001/tbs.2025.v20.i04.pp701-710

Keywords

Primary school, mother tongue, active thinking, development of thinking, speech, speech development, language, speech range.

Received on:

14-09-2025

Accepted on:

17-10-2025

Published on:

25-11-2025

ABSTRACT

This article highlights the content and methods of developing active thinking and mental abilities of students in primary school mother tongue lessons. It focuses on strategies that encourage logical reasoning, creativity, and linguistic competence through interactive learning activities. The study examines pedagogical approaches that stimulate students' speech development and enhance their ability to express thoughts clearly and effectively.

The foundation of education lies in the primary school system, which requires nurturing students from an early age to become well-rounded and mature individuals. Every primary school teacher who truly understands this responsibility must prepare thoroughly for each lesson and

use visual teaching aids effectively. This approach makes it much easier to convey knowledge to children and significantly enhances the quality and meaningfulness of each lesson hour.

In particular, in mother tongue lessons, the learning materials encourage students to

engage in creative exploration and develop initiative. It is essential to use various teaching methods and tools that stimulate intellectual development when completing textbook exercises. This is because primary school students can typically maintain concentration for only 15–20 minutes during a lesson, after which their attention naturally begins to wander. A teacher who recognizes this must diversify their lessons, using a variety of methods and techniques to achieve the desired educational outcomes.

Independent learning plays a vital role in helping students grasp both theoretical and practical materials in the mother tongue subject, as well as in assessing how well they have mastered knowledge and skills.

The issue of “Developing students’ active thinking and reasoning in mother tongue lessons” is one of the key directions in modern education. This is because the mother tongue is not merely about learning grammar—it is a fundamental subject that fosters logical thinking, verbal expression, creativity, and intellectual development. The importance of mother tongue lessons in enhancing students’ active thinking is therefore profound and can be justified as follows.

- Mother tongue lessons help students develop the ability to express their thoughts clearly and fluently, and to speak and write with logical coherence.

- In the process of mastering language rules, students analyze, compare, and generalize — which in turn develops active thinking.

- Through speech culture, learners acquire skills of independent reasoning and creative expression.

To enhance students’ active thinking through mother tongue lessons, it is first necessary to understand the concepts of *thinking*, *active thinking*, and *reasoning*.

Thinking is a psychological process that represents a generalized and indirect reflection of the external world (L.S. Vygotsky, J. Piaget).

Reasoning (tafakkur) is the human ability to analyze knowledge, draw new conclusions, and create innovations based on existing information. Reasoning represents the highest form of cognition.

Active thinking is an intellectual activity aimed at applying knowledge, solving problems, and finding creative solutions.

Based on the above definitions and their meanings, we can state that in mother tongue lessons, the development of active

thinking

begins first and foremost with speech.

Speech is a type of human activity that involves engaging the mind through the use of linguistic means—words, phrases, and sentences. Speech serves the functions of communication and information exchange, as well as expressing one's thoughts, emotions, and influencing others.

Well-developed speech functions as one of the essential tools of active social interaction. For a student, speech is the main instrument for successful learning at school.

What is speech development?

If we consider the learner and their language activities, speech development refers to the active and practical mastery of language in all its aspects—pronunciation, vocabulary, syntactic structure, and coherent speech.

If we consider the teacher's perspective, speech development means using methods and techniques that help students effectively acquire pronunciation, vocabulary, sentence structure, and coherent speech.

For this reason, the grammar and orthography curriculum is divided into four parts (sounds and letters, words, sentences, and coherent speech), and the sections of the mother tongue curriculum are named accordingly: *“Teaching Literacy and Speech*

Development,” “Reading and Speech Development,” and “Grammar, Orthography, and Speech Development.”

For effective speech activity and speech development among students, several conditions must be met:

1. There must be a communicative need for speech to occur. The methodological requirement for developing students' speech is to create situations that stimulate the need or desire to express thoughts orally or in writing.

2. Every speech must have meaningful content and material. The richer and more valuable this material is, the more meaningful the speech becomes. Hence, the second condition for speech development is to ensure that exercises are based on meaningful linguistic material to enrich the content of children's speech.

3. A thought can be understood only when expressed using appropriate linguistic means—words, phrases, sentences, and speech patterns. Therefore, the third condition for successful speech development is to equip students with linguistic tools. It is necessary to provide language models and create a good linguistic environment. By listening to and using speech in practice, children develop an intuitive “sense of

language
,” which serves as the foundation of teaching methodology.

The methodological condition for speech development is to create a comprehensive system of speech activities: first, perceiving a good speech model, and second, creating conditions for expressing one’s own thoughts using acquired language tools.

A child learns language through speech activity. However, this alone is not sufficient, as such learning may remain superficial. There are several aspects to mastering speech:

1. Mastering the norms of literary language. The school teaches students to distinguish the literary language from colloquial, dialectal, and jargon forms, and familiarizes them with the artistic, scientific, and conversational varieties of the literary language.

2. Acquiring essential speech skills necessary for every member of society—namely, reading and writing. Through this, children learn the characteristics of written speech and how it differs from oral communication.

3. Improving students’ speech culture. Since language is a vital means of human communication in society, schools place

special emphasis on cultivating students’ speech culture. To achieve these objectives, teachers must work systematically and purposefully. Therefore, it is important to understand what constitutes the process of developing students’ speech.

In the process of speech development, three main directions are clearly distinguished:

working on the word;

working on the phrase and the sentence;

working on coherent (connected) speech.

The linguistic foundation for work on words, phrases, and sentences is provided by lexicology (together with phraseology and stylistics), morphology, and syntax, while coherent speech is based on logic, literary studies, and the linguistics of complex syntactic structures.

These three directions are carried out in parallel: vocabulary work provides material for sentence construction; working on words, phrases, and sentences prepares students for coherent speech. In turn, connected storytelling and composition serve as tools for enriching students’ vocabulary.

The development of students’ speech has its own methodological tools and specific

types of exercises. Among them, the most important are coherent speech exercises.

Speech development is ensured by consistency, which includes four conditions: sequence, continuity, diversity, and subordination of various exercises to a common goal. Each new exercise is connected with the previous one and prepares students for the next, contributing something new while serving the general objective.

In schools, the development of students' speech is considered one of the main tasks of teaching the mother tongue. Speech development is not only the responsibility of mother tongue and reading lessons, but also of all subjects in the curriculum — such as natural science, mathematics, labor education, visual arts, and music — as well as extracurricular activities.

People use language as a means of expressing thought. Before expressing their ideas aloud, they first think about them — this is called inner speech. Inner speech is unspoken and unwritten — it is “thought speech,” directed toward the individual's own consciousness. External speech, on the other hand, is directed toward others and is expressed through sounds (spoken words) or graphic symbols (written language).

The physiological nature of inner and external speech is the same; the difference is that external speech involves movement of the speech organs producing sound or writing, whereas in inner speech these movements occur silently.

Inner speech helps in understanding and memorizing material; it is an essential means of developing external speech. Thinking and reasoning occur on the basis of inner speech. It teaches students to speak consciously and responsibly in external communication. The process of inner speech and reflection plays a crucial role in the development of students' speech and thinking.

At school, not only external speech but also inner speech is developed. Children learn to read silently and to internalize material through inner speech. They learn to solve tasks independently and, most importantly, to prepare their oral and written statements thoughtfully.

According to the method of expressing thought, **speech** is divided into two types: **oral** and **written**. Oral speech differs from written speech in that oral speech is **sound-based**, while written speech is **graphic-based**. In oral speech, the sense of **hearing** plays the main role, whereas in written speech, the senses of

****sight***

* and ****hand movement**** are dominant. Both oral and written forms of speech serve as means of human communication; however, oral speech occurs in real-life, direct interaction, while written speech can take place without the speaker's presence or specific situational context.

Oral speech is often ****dialogical**** in nature, while written speech is typically ****monological****. Written speech requires strict adherence to logical consistency, avoiding omissions of linguistic forms and unnecessary repetitions. Therefore, written speech is considered more complex and abstract.

In developing students' speech, several specific requirements must be observed:

1. ****Speech must be meaningful.****

A story or composition will only be meaningful if it is based on facts and experiences familiar to the students—what they have observed, experienced in real life, or learned from books, pictures, radio, or television. If students are asked to speak about topics they do not understand or have not encountered, their speech will sound poor and uninformative. The methodology of speech development requires thorough preparation of material for stories and compositions: collecting, discussing,

enriching, identifying the main content, and arranging it in logical sequence—all while considering students' age and interests.

2. ****Speech must be logical.****

Students' speech should be logically structured, coherent, and well-grounded. It should not omit key points or contain unnecessary repetitions or irrelevant content. The logic of speech depends on the student's knowledge of the subject matter. Logical errors usually arise when the topic is poorly understood or chosen carelessly. These two requirements relate to the ****content and structure**** of speech. There are also requirements concerning its ****linguistic form****.

3. ****Speech must be clear.****

Students should not only describe facts, observations, and impressions truthfully and simply but also learn to use the most appropriate linguistic means—words, phrases, and sentences—to express their ideas vividly and precisely.

4. ****Speech must be rich in linguistic means.****

To express ideas clearly, students' speech should be linguistically rich. They should be able to select appropriate synonyms and varied sentence structures that best suit the meaning in any context. Although it is unreasonable to expect

primary school students to have an extensive vocabulary, teachers must consistently work to expand it through classroom activities.

5. ****Speech must be understandable.****

Oral speech should be clear to the listener, and written speech should be understandable to the reader. The speaker or writer must construct their speech considering the listener's or reader's abilities and interests so that it can be easily and equally comprehended.

6. ****Speech must be expressive.****

Expressive speech—lively, beautiful, and persuasive—can deeply affect listeners or readers through the general tone of the story, selected words, emotional language, and sentence structure. For speech to be both clear and expressive, it must be free from dialectal and redundant words.

Thus, the process of developing students' oral and written speech involves fostering meaningful, logical, clear, rich, understandable, and expressive communication..

7. Speech must be correct. In school education, it is of particular importance that speech complies with the norms of literary language. Written speech must be grammatically, orthographically, and punctuationally correct, while oral speech

must follow correct pronunciation (orthoepic) rules. The correctness of speech depends greatly on proper word choice and logical structure.

The above-mentioned requirements are interrelated and are implemented comprehensively within the school education system.

Students have enormous potential for activating their learning and cognitive activities. The conditions of learning tasks are a key means of stimulating this activity. A task becomes truly engaging only if it interests students; in that case, they perform it with greater enthusiasm and initiative.

The content of the task is another important factor that stimulates activity. The thematic diversity of educational materials and their relevance to students' linguistic environment and regional context play a significant role in enhancing engagement.

Speech is not merely a tool for expressing thought but also an instrument for shaping it. Thought serves as the psychological foundation of speech, and enriching thought is a key condition for developing speech. Mastering the system of intellectual activity is essential for successful speech development. Therefore, when developing students' speech, great

importance is given to preparing, improving, selecting, and logically organizing material.

Thinking develops successfully only when it is verbalized and expressed through linguistic means. Concepts are expressed by words or phrases; therefore, a concept becomes an essential element of communication when expressed through language. A person can think and express a concept externally only if they know the word (or phrase) that conveys it.

In speech, thought is formed, while thought, in turn, generates speech. As scholars note: *“Speech is closely connected with thought. Without speech, there can be no thought; without linguistic material, thought cannot be expressed.”*

The verbal formation of thought ensures that it becomes clear, comprehensible, pure, coherent, and logical. Mastery of language — including its phonetics, vocabulary, and grammatical structure — creates the foundation for intellectual development and the refinement of thinking. Knowledge, facts, and various types of information form the material basis for both thought and speech. Speech serves as an important means of studying the process of thinking and is used as one of the

main indicators of a student’s intellectual development.

When evaluating a student’s comprehension of subject material and their overall mental growth, one of the key indicators is how well they can express a given topic in their own speech — in compositions, reports, retellings, or answers to questions.

Thus, speech and thinking cannot be separated: speech develops on the basis of thought, and thought matures and becomes concrete through speech. Conversely, the growth of speech contributes to the formation and improvement of thought.

If activities aimed at developing students’ active thinking and reasoning are carried out regularly in mother tongue lessons, the following positive outcomes can be achieved:

Students learn to think logically and provide evidence for their opinions. Their linguistic literacy and creativity increase. Students acquire the skills to express their thoughts freely, make independent decisions, and write creatively.

1. In intellectual development: Students gain analytical thinking skills, learn to draw logical conclusions, and identify cause-and-effect relationships. Their reasoning expands, and their ability for

independ
ent inquiry and decision-making strengthens.

2. In speech and writing culture: They learn to express their ideas clearly, fluently, logically, and grammatically correctly. The ability to create texts, write creatively, and express opinions freely in oral communication develops.

3. In critical and creative thinking: Students learn to compare information, reason with evidence, and evaluate different viewpoints. They develop the ability to generate original ideas and apply innovative approaches in creative tasks.

4. In motivation for learning and acquiring knowledge: Their desire to participate actively in lessons increases. Students develop the habit of using books, texts, and additional sources independently.

In addition, the following achievements are observed:

- Students learn to defend their own opinions freely and to respect the opinions of others.
- A sense of independence, responsibility, and cooperation culture is formed.
- The quality of knowledge in the mother tongue subject improves.

- They achieve higher results in tests, written assignments, and oral communication.

- Logical thinking skills contribute positively to learning other subjects such as literature, history, law, and even mathematics.

Based on the above methods, it can be concluded that developing active thinking and reasoning in mother tongue lessons ensures students' creative, critical, logical, and independent thinking, as well as their linguistic literacy and personal development.

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