

MODERN APPROACHES TO TEACHING THE MOTHER TONGUE (THE CASE OF SCHOOLS IN UZBEKISTAN)

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Abstract. This article examines the content, aims, and objectives of mother tongue education in general secondary schools in Uzbekistan, with particular attention to the development of students' reading comprehension, listening comprehension, written communication, and oral communication skills. The article provides a scientific and methodological rationale for the significance of the competency-based approach, the "4K" model, interactive methods, and pedagogical technologies aimed at developing students' creative and critical thinking in mother tongue lessons. The study systematizes modern methodological approaches to mother tongue education and considers their potential for transforming linguistic knowledge into practical communicative skills. Particular attention is paid to the integration of grammatical knowledge with speech activities, interdisciplinary integration, graphic organizers, visual information, creative tasks, and diagram- and infographic-based activities.

Keywords: mother tongue education, speech competence, reading comprehension, listening comprehension, written communication, oral communication, competency-based approach.

DOI: 10.30546/2709-2488.2026.003.10935

To cite this article: Soatova N., Xoldorova S. (2026). Modern approaches to teaching the mother tongue (the case of schools in Uzbekistan). *Journal of Preschool and Primary Education*, Vol. 256, Issue III, pp. 61-76.

Article history: received – 26.08.2026; accepted – 28.09.2026.

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ANA DİLİNİN TƏDRİSİNƏ MÜASİR YANAŞMALAR (ÖZBƏKİSTAN MƏKTƏBLƏRİ NÜMUNƏSİNDƏ)

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Annotasiya. Bu məqalədə Özbəkistanın ümumi orta təhsil məktəblərində ana dili tədrisinin məzmunu, məqsəd və vəzifələri araşdırılır, xüsusilə şagirdlərin oxuyub-anlama, dinləyib-anlama, yazılı ünsiyyət və şifahi ünsiyyət bacarıqlarının inkişaf etdirilməsinə xüsusi diqqət yetirilir. Məqalədə kompetensiyaya əsaslanan yanaşmanın, “4K” modelinin, interaktiv metodların və ana dili dərslərində şagirdlərin yaradıcı və tənqidi təfəkkürünün inkişafına yönəlmiş pedaqoji texnologiyaların əhəmiyyətinin elmi-metodiki əsaslandırılması verilir. Tədqiqatda ana dili tədrisinə dair müasir metodiki yanaşmalar sistemləşdirilir və onların linqvistik biliklərin praktik kommunikativ bacarıqlara çevrilməsindəki potensialı nəzərdən keçirilir. Qrammatik biliklərin nitq fəaliyyəti ilə integrasiyasına, fənlərarası integrasiyaya, qrafik təşkilatçılara, vizual informasiyaya, yaradıcı tapşırıqlara, eləcə də diaqram və infoqrafika əsaslı fəaliyyətlərə xüsusi diqqət yetirilir.

Açar sözlər: ana dili tədrisi, nitq kompetensiyası, oxuyub-anlama, dinləyib-anlama, yazılı ünsiyyət, şifahi ünsiyyət, kompetensiyaya əsaslanan yanaşma.

DOI: 10.30546/2709-2488.2026.003.10935

Məqaləyə istinad: Soatova N., Xoldorova S. (2026). Ana dilinin tədrisinə müasir yanaşmalar (Özbəkistan məktəbləri nümunəsində). *«Məktəbəqədər və ibtidai təhsil»*, № 3 (256), səh. 61-76.

Məqalə tarixçəsi: göndərilib – 26.08.2026; qəbul edilib – 28.09.2026.

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Introduction

The mother tongue is one of the fundamental means through which the national identity, spiritual values, and cultural heritage of a nation are expressed. In schools in Uzbekistan, mother tongue education constitutes an important component of the educational system, contributing to the development of students' language proficiency, independent thinking, and personal growth.

Among school subjects, the Uzbek language and literature occupy a significant position. Students' intellectual development and cognitive growth are promoted through the study of the rules and principles of the mother tongue, while such qualities as an appreciation of beauty, love for nature, friendship, humanity, and politeness are developed through literature lessons.

Mother tongue education is intended not only to provide students with grammatical knowledge but also to develop their linguistic, communicative, and cognitive abilities. The ultimate outcome of mastering linguistic units is determined by students' ability to use them accurately, appropriately, effectively, and expressively in real communicative situations. From this perspective, mother tongue lessons should not be organized merely as activities based on memorizing rules, definitions, and classifications. Rather, they should be designed as an educational process that integrates thinking, communication, and creative activity.

The purpose of this article is to systematize modern methodological approaches to teaching the mother tongue in general secondary schools in Uzbekistan and to substantiate the methodological potential of competency-based, communicative, integrative, and "4K" approaches in mother tongue education.

Statement of the Problem

Traditional mother tongue education places considerable emphasis on mastering the levels of the language system, grammatical categories, rules, and classifications. Such knowledge is undoubtedly an essential component of language education. However, linguistic knowledge alone does not fully ensure the development of students' communicative competence. Students should be able to transfer their grammatical knowledge into speech activities, comprehend texts, express their ideas coherently, and select appropriate linguistic means according to different communicative situations.

From this perspective, mother tongue education faces the following methodological challenges:

- strengthening the relationship between grammatical knowledge and speech activities;
- combining theoretical material with practical and communicative tasks;

- developing students' independent and critical thinking;
- creating methodological conditions for creative activity;
- balancing individual and collaborative learning activities;
- teaching students to receive, process, and interpret information presented in different forms, including texts, tables, diagrams, schemes, and infographics;
- using interdisciplinary connections as a means of enriching the content of mother tongue education.

Therefore, the key issue is not simply the availability of numerous modern methods, but rather the appropriate selection and systematic application of these methods in accordance with the objectives, content, and expected learning outcomes of mother tongue education.

Methodology

The study is theoretical and methodological in nature and does not aim to present empirical experimental results. The following research methods were employed:

Theoretical analysis was used to examine scholarly and methodological perspectives related to mother tongue education, competency-based approaches, speech activities, and modern pedagogical technologies.

Comparative analysis made it possible to compare the principal characteristics of traditional knowledge-oriented education and modern competency-oriented education.

Systematization was employed to examine interactive methods, graphic organizers, integrative tasks, and creative forms of learning activities as components of a unified methodological system applicable to mother tongue lessons.

Generalization was used to identify the common didactic potential of modern approaches in mother tongue education.

Methodological modelling was applied to develop a methodological sequence based on the following progression:

linguistic knowledge → speech activity → communicative situation → independent thinking → practical outcome.

The methodological foundation of the study is based on the principles of learner-centered, communicative, competency-based, and integrative approaches to language education.

Main Part

Today, the teaching of the mother tongue in the education system of Uzbekistan is considered an important component of the national education policy. In schools, the **educational content and methodology of the mother tongue sub-**

ject are developed in accordance with the **National Curriculum** and the State Educational Standards.

The National Curriculum is a document that includes the curriculum, subject-specific educational programs, methodological guidelines, and the assessment system. It determines the content of lessons, learning outcomes, and teaching methods. The mother tongue curriculum provides for the development of competencies such as improving students' oral and written communication skills, developing a deeper understanding of the linguistic structure of the language, adhering to literary language norms, analyzing texts, and developing creative expression skills.

The methodology of effective Uzbek language teaching identifies the development of the following skills among students as a key criterion:

1. Reading Comprehension
2. Listening Comprehension
3. Writing Skills
4. Speaking Skills

Reading comprehension is one of the most important components of mother tongue education. This skill develops students' ability to understand the content of a text, identify its main idea, understand the author's position, and express their response to the text. The following activities are considered effective in developing reading comprehension skills: working with texts of different genres; using questions aimed at text analysis; developing outlines and drawing conclusions; and assigning creative tasks based on texts.

Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension develops students' ability to perceive spoken language, understand the information they hear, and respond appropriately. This skill can be developed through listening to the teacher's speech, audio and video materials, dialogues, and discussions.

The development of listening comprehension enhances students' communication culture and contributes to their formation as socially active individuals.

Written Communication

Written communication refers to students' ability to express their thoughts coherently and logically in written form. Essays, summaries, text construction, and creative writing activities play an important role in developing this skill.

In this process, students develop:

- spelling and punctuation accuracy;
- vocabulary;
- stylistic competence;
- the ability to organize ideas coherently.

Oral Communication

The development of oral communication is one of the central areas of mother tongue education. Conversations, debates, role plays, and group discussions help students develop the ability to express their ideas freely, defend their viewpoints, and participate effectively in communication. These skills provide an important foundation for successful participation in social life.

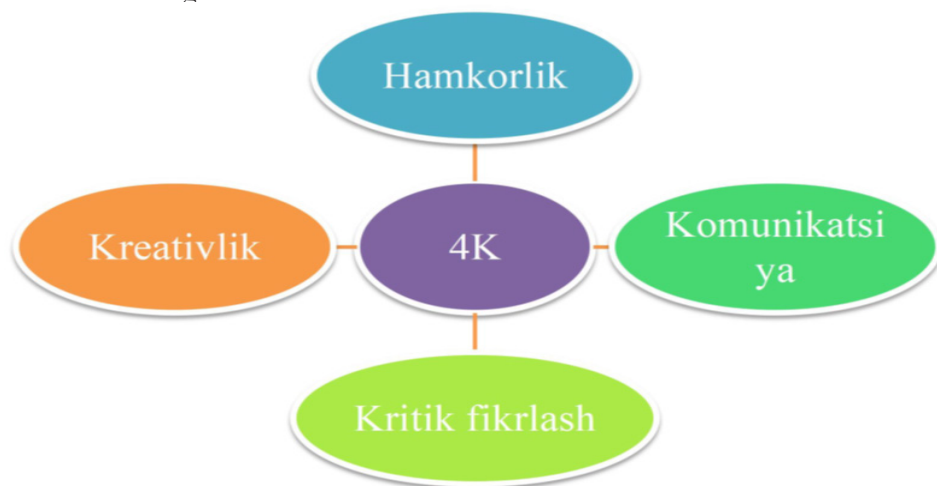
Interactive Teaching Methods

Today, a number of developed countries have accumulated considerable experience in applying modern pedagogical technologies aimed at ensuring the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. Methods that activate learners and encourage independent thinking, with the learner placed at the center of the educational process, are generally referred to as interactive teaching methods [Avlayev, Jo‘rayeva, Mirzayeva, 2017].

Interactive teaching methods are diverse, and selecting an appropriate method according to the specific educational objective is essential for effective teaching. Their appropriate application can contribute to the development of students’ activity, independent thinking, communication, and practical skills.

Today, it can be argued that modern education in general secondary schools in Uzbekistan is increasingly oriented toward the practical application of knowledge rather than simple memorization. In other words, competency-based education has become an important priority. This approach contributes to the development of students’ communicative, information-processing, social, and creative competencies.

At the same time, the “4K model”—communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking—has an increasingly important role in developing students’ knowledge and skills.



Modern Educational Technologies

In order to convey the aesthetic qualities of language to students and help them perceive, appreciate, and use language effectively, modern information and pedagogical technologies are increasingly being incorporated into mother tongue education alongside traditional teaching methods.

In recent years, a variety of methods have been introduced, including brain-writing, brainstorming, the mind-mapping approach, the Boomerang method, blitz questioning, clustering, case studies, and hermeneutic dialogue [Almamatov & Almamatova, 2022].

The use of modern teaching methods is highly significant. Indeed, when teaching a particular topic, a teacher can achieve greater effectiveness by selecting appropriate didactic tools, technologies, and teaching methods that facilitate students' comprehensive understanding of the material.

Furthermore, it is essential that teaching materials and topics incorporate the latest developments in the relevant academic field. This requires teachers to adopt new approaches to education, improve lesson planning, and introduce innovative practices.

Graphic Organizers

Graphic organizers help students understand the theoretical essence of a topic, issue, or problem and apply their understanding in practice through tables and visual structures. When using graphic organizers, students learn to express the main idea, key concepts, and important aspects of a topic concisely and clearly in a table rather than only through oral explanations or written text.

Graphic organizers comprise diagrams, tables, and graphs that assist learners in achieving educational objectives. When a teacher uses a completed graphic organizer as a teaching aid, it functions primarily as a learning tool; when students use it to consolidate their knowledge and develop their thinking, it functions as a methodological technique [Mirzayeva, 2013].

Common graphic organizers include the INSERT method, classification tables, concept tables, conceptual maps, BBB (Know–Want to Know–Learned) charts, cluster diagrams, T-charts, Venn diagrams, SWOT analysis tables, “Why?”, “How?”, and “Fishbone” diagrams, as well as various schemes and diagrams.

These graphic organizers can be effectively used in both secondary schools and higher education institutions.

Interdisciplinary Integration

Throughout their educational experience, students study a wide range of subjects. Each academic discipline has its own specific objectives and tasks. Although mother tongue education differs from other subjects in terms of its immediate objectives, it has the potential to connect and integrate knowledge from

different disciplines.

The acquisition of subject-specific knowledge in various academic fields is realized through language, as students use language to understand, process, communicate, and express that knowledge. Therefore, effective mother tongue instruction can benefit significantly from interdisciplinary integration.

The concept of integration corresponds to the idea expressed by Fariduddin Attar that everything in the world is interconnected and mutually complementary [Ro‘zimuhammad, 2002].

The roots of integration can be traced back to classical pedagogy and psychology. The idea of interdisciplinary connections implies studying educational content as an interconnected whole and understanding nature and knowledge as an integrated system.

A lesson should not be limited to educational objectives; it should also contribute to students' humanistic development. Integrative lessons provide opportunities for discussion, imagination, group competitions, question-and-answer activities, and creative tasks.

The main purpose of such modern lesson formats is to increase students' engagement in the learning process and achieve a higher level of mastery of educational material. Such technologies encourage students to perceive the world from different perspectives, connect theory with real-life practice, avoid mechanical memorization of theoretical rules, understand the relationship between the individual and society, appreciate diversity of perspectives, develop non-standard thinking, and recognize ways of achieving self-development.

Mother tongue and literature are closely interconnected. They complement and reinforce one another. As A. Tvardovsky stated, literature cannot be fully appreciated without the mother tongue, just as the mother tongue cannot be fully mastered without literature [Tvardovsky, 1987]. Therefore, some Uzbek linguists describe the integration of mother tongue and literature as a two-way integration rather than merely external integration. Niyozmetova and Mavlonova argue that it is appropriate to consider the integration of mother tongue and literature as a two-way process [Niyozmetova & Mavlonova, 2016].

Integration has emerged as an important principle for ensuring the comprehensive development of the individual. Consequently, integrated education has become a major factor in students' intellectual and cultural development.

According to the educational perspective associated with J. Dewey, the learner should be regarded as the central element of the educational process, while educational tools and resources should be organized around the learner.

Sh. Yusupova also emphasizes the compatibility of integration processes with the requirements of modern pedagogical technologies. According to her,

integrative lessons can be organized through discussions, activities that develop imagination, intergroup competitions, and question-and-answer sessions. The main purpose of such modern lesson formats is to increase students' activity and achieve a higher level of mastery of educational material [Yusupova, 2005].

It is important for teachers to understand when and which subjects should be integrated. Only then can the intended objectives of integration be achieved.

Pedagogy generally distinguishes between two types of integration:

1. Internal integration
2. External integration

Internal integration refers to the integration of linguistic levels and areas, such as morphology and syntax or lexicology and phonetics. External integration refers to the integration of linguistics with other academic fields, such as literature, physics, and psychology.

In contemporary general secondary school textbooks, the mother tongue is increasingly presented not as an isolated subject but as a discipline closely connected with life, society, culture, and thought. This enables students to perceive language not merely as a collection of rules but as a means of expressing ideas.

Interdisciplinary integration is clearly reflected in contemporary mother tongue textbooks. The content of mother tongue education is connected with literature, history, geography, biology, information technology, and even mathematics. For example, texts may be selected on the basis of historical events, national values, natural phenomena, or social issues, thereby contributing to the expansion of students' worldviews.

Through such integration, students not only study linguistic units but also reinforce knowledge acquired in other subjects and learn to apply this knowledge in speech activities. As a result, knowledge does not remain fragmented but develops as part of a coherent and logical system.

While traditional education often presented linguistic sections separately, contemporary textbooks increasingly establish connections among phonetics, lexicology, grammar, and stylistics. For example, grammatical topics may be taught through authentic or meaningful texts, with the meanings of words, their stylistic functions, and their use in speech analyzed simultaneously.

This approach helps students move beyond mechanical rule memorization and develop the ability to use linguistic units appropriately in practical communication.

For instance, when studying semantic categories of adjectives, teachers can employ interdisciplinary comparisons. Adjectives describing taste and smell can be studied in connection with biology, while color adjectives can be explored through psychology, literature, and visual arts. Such integration not only makes

learning more engaging but also contributes to the expansion of students’ knowledge and worldview.

Creativity plays an important role in intellectual development. By incorporating creative activities into integrative lessons, teachers can contribute to the development of students’ cognitive abilities. Many interdisciplinary exercises encourage learners to search for information, think critically, compare phenomena in language and literature, visual materials, and national culture, and make creative discoveries.

Thus, integration contributes to creativity, intellectual development, memory enhancement, inquiry, and the development of imagination.

Presenting students with different visual materials and connecting them with the topic being studied can facilitate faster comprehension and better retention of information. Visual materials also help students develop vivid mental representations. Such visualization stimulates creativity, while creativity, in turn, contributes to cognitive development.



Therefore, understanding connections among academic subjects and applying these connections in the educational process is of considerable importance.

For example, students may be shown images of different professionals and asked to identify the professions represented. They can then be asked to identify adjectives describing the speech and appearance of television presenters.

Characteristics of speech:	Characteristics of appearance:
Pleasant	formal
.....	
.....	

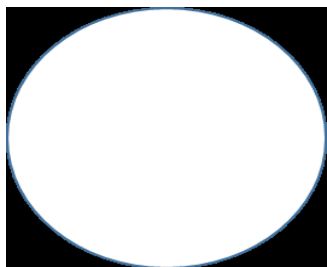
**METHODOLOGICAL RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON THE “4K”
MODEL AND INTEGRATION
TORRANCE METHOD
(BASED ON THE “4K” MODEL)**

The Torrance method is an approach designed to assess and develop students' creative thinking abilities. It was developed by the American psychologist and educator Ellis Paul Torrance and has been used to identify and foster creative thinking in educational settings.

According to the information presented in the methodological literature, similar assessments have been administered periodically in American schools. Research associated with the Torrance approach has also examined the relationship between creative-thinking performance and later achievement.

The method can be implemented through the following activities.

Task 1: “Use It”.



Students are presented with a simple circular shape. The teacher draws the shape prominently on the board and asks students to use it without changing its basic form.

Students should use the circle in different sizes and arrangements to create new objects or forms. For example, they may connect several circles to create a chain or imagine various objects based on the circular shape.

Another student may combine two circles and visualize the number eight.

Task 2: “Complete It”



In the second task, students are presented with an incomplete shape and asked to complete it by transforming it into a new object.

For example, a student may perceive the shape as part of a house and complete the drawing accordingly.

This method contributes to the development of creativity, one of the four principles of the 4K model. It encourages students to generate new ideas, expand their thinking, and engage in creative activity.

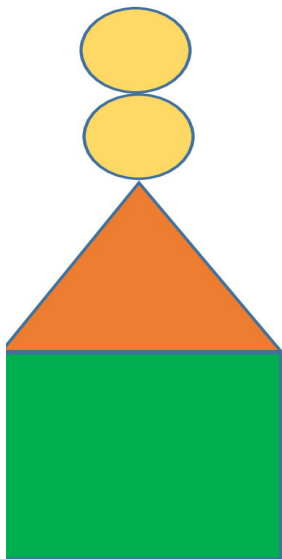


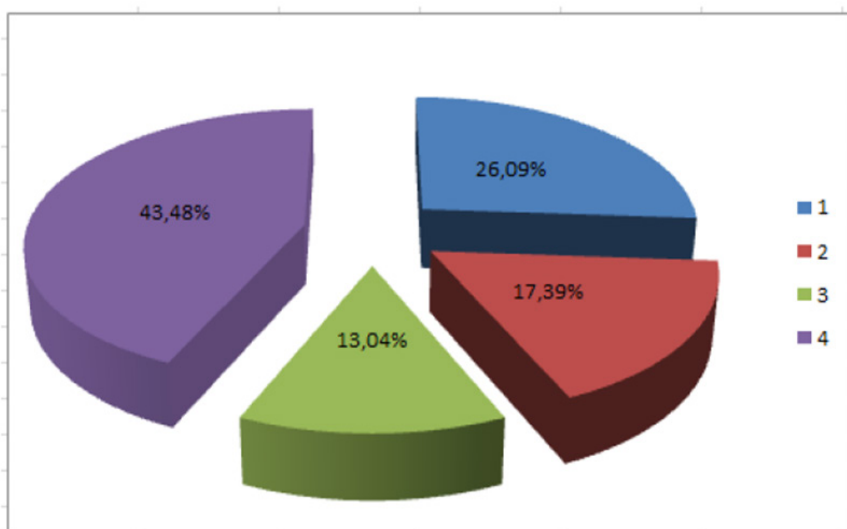
DIAGRAM-BASED TASK

Diagram- and infographic-based activities are also important for developing students' written communication skills. Such activities help students develop the ability to interpret diagrams and transform textual information into visual representations, as well as convert visual information into coherent written texts.

The purpose of this task is to develop students' ability to understand information presented in a diagram and express it in written form.

First, students are asked to examine the diagram carefully. They are then instructed to write a report based on the information presented. Guiding questions can be provided to facilitate their understanding of the data.

For example, students may examine a diagram showing academic performance by subject within a class and write a short report describing the main trends and differences.



Results

The study demonstrates that modern approaches to mother tongue education should not be treated merely as a collection of separate methods but rather as an interconnected methodological system.

First, connecting grammatical knowledge with speech activities expands students' ability to apply linguistic concepts in practical communication.

Second, the competency-based approach and the "4K" model enable mother tongue lessons to move beyond the acquisition of knowledge toward applying knowledge, analyzing information, communicating, and creating original products.

Third, the effectiveness of interactive methods and graphic organizers depends on their appropriate selection according to the objectives of the lesson. Therefore, the didactic purpose of a method should be considered more important than the name of the method itself.

Fourth, interdisciplinary integration enables linguistic knowledge to be connected with meaningful real-world contexts and helps students transfer knowledge across different situations.

Fifth, the use of diagrams, infographics, and creative tasks contributes to the development of students' ability to process, generalize, and express information verbally.

On this basis, the methodological model of a modern mother tongue lesson should follow the following sequence:

knowledge → activity → communication → analysis → creativity → prac-

tical outcome.

Relevance of the study:

Improving the methodology of mother tongue education is of particular importance in contemporary education. Modern students work with large amounts of information, communicate in diverse environments, and need to express their ideas through different forms of communication.

Under these conditions, focusing exclusively on the acquisition of grammatical knowledge is insufficient. Students should not only understand linguistic units but also be able to use them appropriately in communicative situations, critically analyze information, express independent opinions, and produce creative texts.

The increasing emphasis on modern methodology, communication-oriented education, and practical tasks in Uzbek language teaching further enhances the practical relevance of this field.

Therefore, systematically organizing the competency-based approach, the 4K model, interactive methods, interdisciplinary integration, and technologies for working with visual information represents an important and relevant task in contemporary mother tongue education.

Scientific novelty:

The scientific novelty of the study is reflected in the following aspects:

- Modern approaches to teaching the mother tongue in general secondary schools in Uzbekistan have been systematized on the basis of the interrelationship among competency-based, communicative, integrative, and “4K” approaches.
- A methodological sequence based on transforming grammatical knowledge into speech activity—linguistic knowledge → comprehension → analysis → communicative situation → creative activity → speech product—has been substantiated as a methodological model.
- The potential of the “4K” model in mother tongue education has been interpreted not merely in terms of mastering linguistic material but in connection with communicative, collaborative, creative, and critical-thinking activities.
- The methodological potential of interactive methods, graphic organizers, interdisciplinary integration, creative tasks, and diagram- and infographic-based activities has been identified as components of a unified methodological system rather than as isolated instructional tools.
- The methodological possibilities of tasks aimed at transforming visual information into verbal communication, transferring grammatical knowledge into communicative situations, and creating texts based on interdisciplinary content have been systematized.

These findings do not claim the development of an entirely new pedagogical method. Rather, they are based on the systematic organization and methodolog-

ical modelling of existing modern approaches in accordance with the objectives of mother tongue education.

Practical significance:

The findings of the study can be used in planning and organizing mother tongue lessons in general secondary schools.

The proposed methodological approaches can be applied to:

- developing practical tasks for mother tongue lessons;
- connecting grammatical topics with speech activities;
- designing tasks based on the 4K model;
- organizing pair and group work;
- designing learning activities using graphic organizers;
- developing interdisciplinary lessons;
- improving written communication through diagrams and infographics;
- developing students' creative and critical thinking;
- organizing text-based and communicative tasks;
- developing criteria for formative and summative assessment during lessons.

These approaches can also be used in professional development courses for mother tongue teachers, the activities of methodological associations, open lessons, lesson plans, and the development of teaching and methodological materials.

Conclusion

In conclusion, mother tongue education in schools in Uzbekistan is undergoing continuous development in accordance with the requirements of contemporary education. Lessons organized on the basis of the 4K principles, competency-oriented approaches, interdisciplinary integration, and the National Curriculum contribute to improving students' language proficiency and developing them as independent and creative thinkers.

The integration of linguistic knowledge with communication, critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and practical activities enables students to perceive the mother tongue not simply as a system of grammatical rules but as an effective means of understanding and expressing the world.

Consequently, the systematic application of modern pedagogical approaches, interactive methods, interdisciplinary integration, and visual-information-based tasks can significantly enrich the methodological potential of mother tongue education. Attention to the mother tongue also plays an important role in strengthening the intellectual, cultural, and spiritual foundations of the younger generation.

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