

## Improving the Content of Developing Professional Competence of Future Primary School Teachers Through “Mother Tongue” Subject Lessons

Shokirov Temurmalik Farhod o‘g‘li

Researcher, Termiz State Pedagogical Institute

Email: temurmalikshokirov100@gmail.com

**Annotation:** This article discusses the improvement of the content aimed at developing the professional competence of future primary school teachers through lessons in the “Mother Tongue” subject. It provides theoretical insights into how language teaching contributes to forming communicative, linguistic, and methodological competencies in teacher trainees. The study emphasizes the importance of using effective educational tasks, interactive teaching methods, and modern pedagogical strategies to enhance future educators’ preparedness. The paper also analyzes practical methods for integrating such approaches into training programs to ensure well-rounded professional development.

**Keywords:** mother tongue, primary school teachers, professional competence, teacher training, educational content, methodological competence, interactive teaching.



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In the modern educational landscape, the role of a primary school teacher is becoming increasingly complex and demanding. Future educators are expected not only to impart basic knowledge but also to nurture learners’ communication skills, critical thinking, and cultural awareness from the earliest stages of education. In this context, the subject of “Mother Tongue” plays a crucial role, serving as a foundational discipline through which both linguistic proficiency and broader educational goals are achieved.

Developing the professional competence of future primary school teachers is a key priority in teacher training institutions. Professional competence encompasses a wide range of abilities, including subject-specific knowledge, pedagogical skills, methodological flexibility, and interpersonal communication. “Mother Tongue” lessons provide a unique platform for integrating these competencies, as the subject inherently involves language development, comprehension, and expression—skills that are vital for successful teaching and learning.

Moreover, as educational systems shift towards learner-centered and competency-based models, it is essential to re-evaluate and enhance the content and methodology used in teaching the “Mother Tongue” to teacher candidates. The integration of interactive teaching strategies, differentiated

instruction, and contextualized learning experiences is imperative for equipping future teachers with the tools needed for effective classroom practice.

This paper explores the ways in which “Mother Tongue” instruction can be strategically utilized to foster the professional competence of pre-service primary school teachers. It examines current practices, identifies key challenges, and proposes content improvements and methodological innovations aimed at aligning teacher preparation with the evolving demands of the education sector.

A number of studies have emphasized the significance of developing professional competence in future primary school teachers, particularly through core subjects such as the “Mother Tongue.” Scholars such as Shulman (1987) and Darling-Hammond (2006) highlight that effective teaching is deeply rooted in pedagogical content knowledge, which integrates subject mastery with the ability to communicate and teach that knowledge effectively. In the context of language education, this competence becomes even more critical, as teachers must simultaneously develop their own linguistic skills and teach them to young learners.

In Uzbek educational research, the works of A. Turg’unov (2018) and M. Ergasheva (2020) explore the role of the “Mother Tongue” in shaping communicative and cultural competence in future teachers. They argue that the teaching of native language is not only about grammar and vocabulary but also about cultivating a sense of identity, values, and communicative fluency—core elements of a teacher’s professional profile.

Global trends in teacher education, as examined by UNESCO (2015) and the OECD (2020), stress the need to prepare teachers who are adaptive, reflective, and capable of applying a range of instructional strategies. These studies support the inclusion of interactive, student-centered, and practice-oriented methodologies in pre-service training programs. The “Mother Tongue” subject, with its flexible content and emphasis on communication, is an ideal environment to implement these methods.

Furthermore, several researchers (e.g., Freeman, 2002; Richards & Farrell, 2005) have emphasized the importance of reflective practice and the integration of microteaching sessions in language-based courses. These practices allow teacher candidates to develop not only theoretical knowledge but also practical skills in lesson planning, student engagement, and classroom management.

In addition, the Uzbek national curriculum reforms (Ministry of Preschool and School Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2022) emphasize competency-based learning approaches, which require teacher educators to redesign the content and delivery of foundational subjects like the “Mother Tongue.” These reforms support the argument that subject courses must serve a dual purpose: reinforcing subject matter knowledge and contributing to the broader professional formation of the future teacher.

Overall, the literature indicates a growing consensus that the “Mother Tongue” subject can and should play a transformative role in shaping the competencies of future primary school educators. However, there remains a need for more context-specific research that addresses the practical realities and challenges faced in Uzbek teacher training institutions.

The research focused on analyzing the effectiveness of “Mother Tongue” subject lessons in fostering the professional competence of future primary school teachers. Through classroom observations, student surveys, and expert interviews, several key findings emerged, highlighting both strengths and areas for improvement in current practices.

To begin with, it was observed that while many lessons still rely on traditional, teacher-centered methods—such as rote learning and grammar-focused instruction—there are also instances of progressive teaching where competence-based tasks are employed. In particular, lessons that

included interactive activities such as role-playing, storytelling, and collaborative writing tasks significantly contributed to the development of future teachers' methodological, communicative, and reflective skills. These lessons allowed students not only to master linguistic knowledge but also to practice real-life classroom scenarios, thereby bridging theory and practice.

However, despite the recognized benefits of such interactive strategies, their consistent application remains limited. Many trainee teachers are not yet fully equipped with the necessary tools and methodologies to implement student-centered teaching effectively. This suggests a need for stronger emphasis on methodical training and guided practice within the "Mother Tongue" curriculum itself.

Another positive outcome identified in the study was the improvement of pedagogical thinking among teacher trainees. Students who were regularly involved in microteaching sessions and lesson planning activities demonstrated greater confidence and awareness in lesson delivery, class management, and age-appropriate language instruction. These findings underscore the importance of integrating practice-based learning into subject-specific courses to develop well-rounded teaching professionals.

Despite these advances, the analysis also revealed a critical issue: the content of many "Mother Tongue" lesson plans and teaching materials appears outdated and not fully aligned with modern educational standards or the practical demands of primary education. This disconnect hinders the development of core professional competencies and reduces the relevance of the subject in preparing future teachers.

Furthermore, survey data showed a clear correlation between linguistic confidence and professional readiness. Those trainees who demonstrated strong command of their native language were not only more active participants during the lessons but also more effective in delivering instructions, structuring content, and engaging learners. This highlights the central role of language mastery in shaping a teacher's overall competence.

In summary, the analysis reveals that the "Mother Tongue" subject has great potential to serve as a foundation for developing the professional competence of future teachers. However, this potential can only be realized through the consistent use of interactive methods, updated teaching materials, and an increased focus on hands-on pedagogical practice.

The findings of this study underscore the multifaceted role that "Mother Tongue" instruction can play in pre-service teacher education. First, the integration of competence-based activities—such as role-play, storytelling, and collaborative writing—demonstrated that language lessons need not be confined to the mechanics of grammar and vocabulary. When guided by clear professional-competence objectives, these interactive tasks become powerful vehicles for cultivating pedagogical skills. For example, by designing and enacting mini-lessons in peer microteaching sessions, trainees internalize both the content and form of effective instruction, gaining insights into pacing, scaffolding, and learner engagement.

Nevertheless, the uneven adoption of such methods points to a systemic gap in methodological preparation. Despite national curriculum reforms that advocate competency-based learning, many instructors and materials remain wedded to traditional lecture formats. This discrepancy suggests that updating the "Mother Tongue" syllabus alone is insufficient; teacher educators themselves must receive sustained professional development in interactive and student-centered pedagogies. Only then can the promise of communicative and reflective practice be fully realized in the classroom.

Moreover, the demonstrated link between linguistic confidence and teaching readiness highlights an often-overlooked principle: subject-matter mastery underpins pedagogical competence. Trainees who feel secure in their own language use are more likely to experiment with varied

instructional strategies, respond flexibly to learner needs, and articulate clear explanations. Consequently, strengthening linguistic proficiency—through advanced text analysis, academic writing exercises, and oral-presentation workshops—should be considered a core component of teacher-training programs alongside methodological instruction.

At the same time, the persistence of outdated materials signals a need for continual curriculum renewal. Textbooks, sample lesson plans, and assessment instruments must be revisited to ensure alignment with current research on child-centered learning, multicultural education, and digital literacy. Collaborative partnerships between universities, schools, and educational publishers could facilitate the co-creation of resources that reflect real-world classroom contexts and the evolving demands of 21st-century teaching.

Finally, while this study provides valuable insights, it also has limitations that warrant further inquiry. The sample was drawn primarily from one institution, and observations were confined to language classrooms; future research should expand to multiple regions and include longitudinal tracking of graduates in their first years of service. Additionally, investigating the impact of specific training modules (e.g., microteaching workshops vs. peer mentoring) could help isolate the most effective components for building professional competence.

In conclusion, the “Mother Tongue” subject holds considerable untapped potential for shaping competent, reflective, and confident primary-school teachers. Realizing this potential will require a holistic approach—one that weaves together updated content, robust methodological training, and a deepened focus on linguistic mastery—so that every lesson becomes an opportunity for professional growth.

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