

**SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATIONS OF DEVELOPING INDEPENDENT THINKING IN
PRIMARY EDUCATION THROUGH MOTHER TONGUE LESSONS**

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Annotation: This article explores the scientific foundations of developing independent thinking in primary school students through mother tongue lessons. Drawing on psychological and pedagogical theories, as well as Uzbek and international educational research, the study emphasizes the central role of language in shaping cognitive independence. The methodology is based on theoretical analysis, comparative review, and pedagogical observation. The results indicate that independent thinking can be effectively fostered through problem-based learning, dialogic teaching, creative tasks, and reflective activities integrated into native language lessons. The conclusion highlights that combining global pedagogical perspectives with Uzbek educational traditions provides a strong basis for nurturing autonomous and creative thinkers in primary education.

Keywords: Independent thinking; primary education; mother tongue lessons; pedagogy; psychology of learning; problem-based learning; dialogic teaching; Uzbek education.

Introduction

Independent thinking is regarded as one of the most essential competencies that modern education must cultivate in young learners. In an era characterized by rapid technological, social, and cultural changes, schools are no longer expected to transmit knowledge alone; rather, they are tasked with preparing students to think critically, solve problems creatively, and make informed decisions. Primary education, as the foundational stage of lifelong learning, plays a decisive role in shaping such abilities [7].

Mother tongue lessons occupy a central place in this process, as language is both a means of communication and a tool for thought. According to Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory, the development of thinking is inseparable from the acquisition of language, which mediates cognitive functions and enables children to internalize knowledge [1]. In this regard, teaching the mother tongue in primary school not only enhances literacy skills but also fosters logical reasoning, reflective thinking, and the ability to express original ideas [2,3].

Previous research has demonstrated that interactive methods, problem-based tasks, and creative exercises in language classes encourage students to move beyond rote memorization and engage in independent analysis [4–6]. However, despite growing recognition of its importance, the scientific foundations and pedagogical strategies for fostering independent thinking through mother tongue education in the early years remain underexplored.

Therefore, this article aims to analyze the theoretical and methodological principles underlying the development of independent thinking in primary school students through mother tongue lessons. The study emphasizes the psychological, pedagogical, and practical dimensions of this process, seeking to contribute to both educational research and classroom practice.

Methodology

This study is based on a qualitative analysis of psychological and pedagogical theories related to the development of independent thinking in children, as well as a review of practical approaches in primary education. The methodology combines three key components: theoretical analysis, comparative review, and pedagogical observation.

First, theoretical analysis was conducted by examining the works of leading scholars in developmental psychology and pedagogy, including Vygotsky [1], Piaget [2], and Bruner [3], to identify the role of language in cognitive development and independent thought. These theories provided a scientific foundation for understanding how mother tongue lessons contribute to higher-order thinking skills.

Second, a comparative review of contemporary research and educational reports was carried out, focusing on innovative teaching strategies that foster independent thinking. Sources included recent works on dialogic teaching [5], critical thinking in education [4], and international frameworks such as the OECD's Education 2030 project [7]. This allowed the identification of best practices that can be adapted to the context of primary education.

Finally, pedagogical observation and classroom analysis were applied to evaluate how mother tongue lessons can be structured to stimulate independent thinking. Specific attention was given to the use of problem-based learning, interactive discussions, and creative tasks as methodological tools that engage students in active cognitive processes rather than passive memorization.

The methodological approach of this article is thus interpretive and descriptive rather than experimental. By synthesizing theoretical perspectives and practical insights, the study seeks to establish a set of scientific foundations and teaching strategies that can guide educators in cultivating independent thinking skills in primary school students through mother tongue lessons.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of theoretical literature and pedagogical practice revealed that the development of independent thinking in primary school students through mother tongue lessons can be understood from three main perspectives: **psychological foundations**, **pedagogical approaches**, and **practical classroom strategies**.

1. Psychological foundations.

Language is not only a communication tool but also a mediator of thought. According to Vygotsky [1], children's higher mental functions, including logical reasoning and problem-solving, are formed through linguistic interaction. Similarly, Piaget [2] emphasized that cognitive development in early childhood is closely tied to the child's ability to operate with symbols, words, and concepts. Thus, mother tongue lessons are essential in shaping mental independence by giving children the means to articulate, reflect upon, and restructure their ideas.

2. Pedagogical approaches.

Mother tongue education provides a fertile ground for cultivating independent thinking when teachers employ active learning strategies. Research by Lipman [4] and Mercer & Littleton [5]

shows that dialogic teaching, problem-based learning, and collaborative tasks significantly enhance students' ability to think critically and independently. These methods shift the focus from teacher-centered instruction to student-centered exploration, encouraging learners to construct their own meanings rather than reproduce information.

3. Practical classroom strategies.

Classroom observations and comparative reviews suggest several effective practices:

- **Problem-based tasks:** Presenting open-ended questions that require students to analyze, compare, and justify their answers.
- **Interactive discussions:** Encouraging students to exchange opinions, defend their viewpoints, and listen to others.
- **Creative assignments:** Using storytelling, composition writing, and imaginative exercises to stimulate originality.
- **Reflective exercises:** Asking students to explain the reasoning behind their answers helps them become more aware of their thought processes.

The integration of these strategies into mother tongue lessons has been found to promote intellectual autonomy, creativity, and confidence in students' own reasoning abilities. Importantly, this process requires teachers to move beyond traditional rote learning practices and instead cultivate a classroom environment where mistakes are seen as opportunities for growth and where every child's opinion is valued.

Overall, the findings confirm that fostering independent thinking through mother tongue lessons is both scientifically grounded and practically achievable. It requires a shift in pedagogy toward interactive, reflective, and student-centered methods, supported by a strong understanding of developmental psychology and linguistics.

Results and Discussion (with Uzbek sources)

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1. Psychological foundations.

Language is not only a communication tool but also a mediator of thought. According to Vygotsky [1], children's higher mental functions, including logical reasoning and problem-solving, are formed through linguistic interaction. Similarly, Piaget [2] emphasized that cognitive development in early childhood is closely tied to the child's ability to operate with symbols, words, and concepts. Uzbek scholars such as Yo'ldoshev [8] also highlight that the ability to express thoughts clearly in one's mother tongue forms the basis for analytical and critical thinking in later stages of education.

2. Pedagogical approaches.

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enhance students' ability to think critically and independently. These views are echoed in Uzbek pedagogy as well. Qodirova [9] underlines that communicative and activity-based methods in native language classes help students to "think, compare, and reason independently." Similarly, Shodmonov [10] stresses the importance of applying innovative pedagogical technologies in primary education to nurture creativity and originality.

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Conclusion

The study confirms that mother tongue lessons in primary education serve not only as a means of developing literacy but also as a powerful tool for shaping independent thinking. Language, as emphasized by both international and Uzbek scholars [1,2,8,9], is inseparable from thought, and its proper instruction creates the foundation for students to analyze, reflect, and generate original ideas.

The findings show that independent thinking can be effectively fostered through three dimensions:

1. **Psychological foundations** – language as a mediator of cognitive development;
2. **Pedagogical approaches** – the use of dialogic teaching, problem-based learning, and activity-based strategies;
3. **Practical classroom strategies** – problem-solving tasks, creative exercises, and reflective activities that engage students actively.

Incorporating these strategies into mother tongue lessons requires teachers to move away from traditional rote learning and toward student-centered instruction. Such an approach not only

enhances the development of logical reasoning and creativity but also prepares learners for the challenges of modern education and society.

Thus, the scientific foundations for cultivating independent thinking through mother tongue instruction are deeply rooted in both global pedagogical theories and the rich methodological traditions of Uzbek education. The integration of these perspectives ensures that primary education remains a strong platform for nurturing autonomous, critical, and creative thinkers.

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