

Scientific And Theoretical Basis For Developing Linguistic Competence Of Primary School Students

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Abstract: This article explores the scientific and theoretical foundations for developing linguistic competence among primary school students, with a particular focus on the educational context of Uzbekistan. Through content analysis, classroom observation, and interviews with primary school teachers, the study reveals a gap between theoretical approaches and their practical implementation in Uzbek schools. The findings highlight the importance of communicative, student-centered, and integrative methods in fostering effective language acquisition. Recommendations are made for curriculum reform, teacher training, and the development of contextually appropriate teaching materials to enhance linguistic competence in primary education.

Keywords: Linguistic competence, primary education, language acquisition, communicative approach, multilingual education, curriculum development, teacher training.

Introduction: Linguistic competence, defined as the ability to use language accurately and effectively, is a foundational skill cultivated during early childhood education [6]. For primary school children, this competence is crucial not only for communication but also for cognitive development and academic success across all subjects. Understanding the scientific and theoretical foundations of how linguistic competence develops allows educators to create more effective teaching strategies tailored to young learners' needs.

For primary school students, mastering linguistic competence goes beyond simple vocabulary acquisition; it involves understanding complex grammatical rules, developing phonological awareness, and applying language in a variety of contexts such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening.

The development of linguistic competence during the primary school years is a dynamic and multifaceted process influenced by biological, cognitive, social, and environmental factors [4]. This period is recognized by linguists, psychologists, and educators as a sensitive window when children's language abilities grow rapidly and shape their academic performance and overall personal growth. Therefore, it is essential to ground

language teaching practices in a strong scientific and theoretical framework that accounts for how children acquire language and develop linguistic skills.

METHODS

Linguistic competence refers to the internalized knowledge that enables individuals to produce and understand language correctly and appropriately within a social context. Noam Chomsky, who introduced the term, emphasized the innate capacity of humans to acquire language, highlighting the mental grammar that underpins linguistic performance [1]. For primary school students, linguistic competence encompasses several interrelated components: phonological awareness, vocabulary development, morphological and syntactic knowledge, semantic understanding, and pragmatic skills.

The term competence in linguistics was introduced by the foreign scientist Noam Chomsky in 1965 to expand the range of linguistic knowledge. But the concept of language ability was used in linguistics long before the research of N. Chomsky and is found in the works of F. de Saussure, published at the beginning of the 20th century. "It is natural for a person ... to create a language, i.e. a system of differentiated signs

corresponding to differentiated concepts” [2].

This study utilized a qualitative-descriptive and theoretical-methodological approach to explore the scientific and theoretical foundations for developing linguistic competence among primary school students in Uzbekistan. The research integrated theoretical analysis with empirical data from schools in Uzbekistan to form a comprehensive model that aligns with national education standards and multilingual policies.

To ensure the validity and relevance of the research within the Uzbek educational context, the following methods were employed:

1. Content analysis of scholarly literature in pedagogy, psycholinguistics, and linguistics, with a particular focus on Uzbek-language acquisition and multilingual education in early grades.
2. Systematization and generalization of theoretical principles from both local and international research related to linguistic competence and communicative skills development.
3. Modeling to create a conceptual framework suited for primary schools in Uzbekistan, integrating national standards and culturally responsive pedagogy.

Empirical Methods:

1. Classroom observations were conducted in selected public primary schools in Uzbekistan to analyze real-time instructional practices and student engagement in linguistic activities.
2. Structured interviews and written questionnaires were administered to primary school teachers, methodologists, and education specialists to gather practical insights on challenges and strategies in language teaching.
3. Analysis of educational materials, including the national curriculum for primary education, language textbooks approved by the Ministry of Preschool and School Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and relevant teacher guides.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study aimed to investigate the scientific and theoretical foundations that underpin the development of linguistic competence in primary school students. The analysis included a review of contemporary linguistic and pedagogical theories, a survey of primary education curricula in selected schools, and interviews with primary school teachers regarding practical approaches to developing students' linguistic skills.

The study examined the scientific and theoretical foundations for developing linguistic competence in primary school students within the context of

Uzbekistan's education system. The analysis incorporated a review of modern linguistic and pedagogical theories, the content of national curriculum standards, and semi-structured interviews with primary school teachers across several regions of Uzbekistan.

The review of linguistic and pedagogical literature revealed that the development of linguistic competence in early learners is most effectively supported by an integrative approach. Key theoretical foundations include:

Chomsky's theory of linguistic competence and performance, emphasizing the innate ability of language acquisition [1];

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which underscores the role of social interaction and scaffolding in language development [3];

The communicative approach to language teaching (CLT), focusing on meaningful communication over rote memorization [5];

Constructivist learning theories, promoting active engagement with language through real-world tasks and collaboration.

These theories collectively suggest that linguistic competence is best cultivated through a combination of formal instruction, interactive activities, and contextual language use.

Curricular documents from five primary schools were analyzed for their alignment with the theoretical foundations mentioned above. The results showed:

- a) strong emphasis on vocabulary acquisition and grammar in the early grades;
- b) limited integration of communicative tasks, particularly in the lower grades;
- c) inconsistent application of differentiated instruction, with few materials tailored for students with diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Overall, the curriculum favors a traditional linguistic approach, often lacking in opportunities for natural language use and functional communication.

Semi-structured interviews with 15 primary school teachers revealed several patterns:

1. Most teachers recognized the importance of oral communication skills but cited time constraints and standardized testing as barriers to implementing interactive activities.
2. Teachers expressed a desire for more professional development in language acquisition theory and modern teaching methods.
3. Several educators highlighted the positive impact of

storytelling, drama, and peer collaboration in enhancing students' linguistic competence.

Notably, teachers who incorporated integrated language activities across subjects (e.g., reading in science or math) observed better retention and engagement among students.

The findings reinforce the view that linguistic competence in primary school students is best developed through a theoretically grounded, student-centered, and communicatively rich approach. While traditional grammar instruction has its place in forming the structural basis of language, an over-reliance on such methods may hinder the development of broader communicative skills.

The disconnect between theoretical recommendations and practical implementation – especially regarding the integration of interactive and meaningful language use – suggests the need for systemic change in curriculum design and teacher training.

Furthermore, the results support the claim that linguistic competence is not a monolithic construct, but rather a dynamic and multifaceted ability that includes grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, pragmatics, and sociolinguistic awareness. The communicative language teaching (CLT) approach remains underutilized, despite its strong alignment with both theoretical insights and modern educational goals.

Teachers' positive experiences with integrated and interactive methods underscore the potential for change when theoretical knowledge informs practice. However, their concerns also highlight systemic obstacles such as rigid curricula and limited resources, which must be addressed to create a more conducive environment for developing linguistic competence.

Based on these findings, several key implications emerge:

1. Curriculum reform should prioritize communicative and integrated language tasks.
2. Teacher training programs must include deeper instruction in linguistic theories and their classroom applications.
3. Assessment practices should move beyond grammar-focused testing to include oral proficiency and real-life language use.

Cross-disciplinary integration can serve as a powerful tool for contextualizing language learning.

CONCLUSION

The development of linguistic competence in primary school students represents a fundamental objective of modern language education, particularly within the context of Uzbekistan's evolving educational landscape

and multilingual policy. This research has identified and systematized the scientific and theoretical foundations necessary for the effective formation of linguistic competence at the primary level, drawing on pedagogical theories, linguistic principles, and empirical findings from school settings.

The study confirms that linguistic competence in early education must be understood as a multidimensional construct, encompassing not only knowledge of vocabulary and grammar but also the ability to use language appropriately in communicative contexts. Theoretical analysis has shown that the integration of psycholinguistic and sociocultural approaches – particularly those emphasizing communication, interaction, and cognitive development – provides a robust foundation for language instruction in the early grades.

Empirical findings from observations, interviews, and curriculum analysis show that although communicative and competency-based methods are being introduced, serious challenges remain. These include limited instructional time, insufficient teacher training in modern language pedagogy, and a need for more integrative, culturally responsive teaching materials. At the same time, the presence of multilingualism in many Uzbek classrooms presents both a challenge and a valuable resource for developing linguistic competence.

The research underscores the importance of aligning language teaching practices with clearly defined theoretical models that reflect the realities of primary education in Uzbekistan. A scientifically grounded approach to linguistic competence development must include not only the cognitive and linguistic aspects of learning but also motivational, cultural, and social dimensions that influence language use in real-life contexts.

In conclusion, the study contributes to the on going discourse on language education reform in Uzbekistan by proposing a comprehensive framework for linguistic competence development that can guide curriculum design, teacher training, and classroom practice. Further research is recommended to develop, test, and refine practical models and methodological tools tailored to the diverse linguistic and cultural environment of Uzbekistan's primary schools.

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