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METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MOTHER-TONGUE TEACHING IN PRIMARY EDUCATION UNDER GLOBALIZATION (A case study of Grades 3–4)

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Abstract. This article examines, from theoretical and methodological perspectives, ways to improve the effectiveness of mother-tongue teaching in Grades 3–4 of primary education under conditions of globalization. It analyses the didactic potential of the communicative approach, text-based learning, interdisciplinary integration, digital educational resources and formative assessment in mother-tongue lessons.

Keywords: mother-tongue education, primary education, communicative competence, text-based learning, integration, digital resources, formative assessment.

The process of globalization is placing new demands on educational content and teaching methods, just as it is transforming other spheres of social life. The rapid growth of information flows, the widespread use of digital communication tools and the expansion of intercultural interaction require learners not only to receive information but also to understand, select and evaluate it, as well as to express their own ideas clearly. In this context, mother-tongue education is an important pedagogical environment that develops not only students' literacy but also their independent thinking, communication culture and ability to work with information.

It is not sufficient to assess the effectiveness of mother-tongue teaching solely by learners' ability to memorize grammatical rules or by a reduction in the number of spelling errors. Students should be able to use linguistic units appropriately in communicative situations, understand the content of texts, formulate questions, provide

evidence and express their ideas coherently in both spoken and written forms. The methodology of mother-tongue teaching addresses what should be taught, how and why it should be taught, and how the effectiveness of methods and exercises can be determined [1, pp. 56].

Grades 3–4 represent an important stage in achieving these objectives. During this period, learners consolidate their basic literacy skills and develop the ability to read consciously, identify main ideas, establish the sequence of events, make outlines and create texts independently. Therefore, mother-tongue lessons in these grades should not be limited to explaining rules and completing exercises; they should be organized around tasks that actively engage learners in speech and communication.

The purpose of this article is to identify the methodological factors that improve the effectiveness of mother-tongue teaching in Grades 3–4 under globalization, substantiate the relationships among these factors and develop recommendations that can be applied in classroom practice. The study uses the methods of analysing, comparing and generalizing scholarly and methodological literature, as well as methodological modelling.

It would be inaccurate to interpret globalization in education merely as the introduction of technology into the learning process. It also creates a need to connect educational content with the international information environment, understand different cultural perspectives, recognize the national language and values, and communicate responsibly in digital spaces. For this reason, mother-tongue lessons should combine national and cultural content with themes of universal significance. Topics such as “Mother Nature,” “Books and Knowledge,” “Our Neighbourhood,” “Professions” and “Responsible Use of the Internet” can draw on learners’ everyday experiences while expanding their vocabulary and worldview.

The communicative purpose should remain at the centre of mother-tongue education. The communicative approach encourages learners not merely to name linguistic phenomena but to use them consciously when expressing ideas. For example,

when studying adjectives, students should go beyond stating the definition and select appropriate adjectives to describe an object accurately. When studying verbs, they should construct sentences by taking into account the tense of an action and the person performing it. In this way, grammatical knowledge is connected with practical communicative needs.

Information literacy is also important in the context of globalization. Learners should be able to distinguish between main and secondary information in a text, understand the relationship between a title and the content, and interpret an image, table or short message. Although digital technologies create new educational opportunities, their effectiveness depends on the purpose of their use, teachers' preparedness and their relevance to educational needs. The UNESCO report also emphasizes that technology does not automatically improve education and should be used in ways that respond to learners' needs and are supported by evidence [2, pp. 6–7].

The first principle is alignment with learners' age-related and individual characteristics. In Grade 3, it is appropriate to consolidate foundational skills such as understanding the content of a text, identifying key words, arranging sentences in a logical order and preparing a simple outline. In Grade 4, tasks can increasingly focus on explaining the main idea of a text, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, expressing a response to the author's viewpoint, drawing evidence-based conclusions and creating independent texts. The distinction between grades should not, however, become a rigid boundary; task complexity should increase gradually in accordance with each learner's level of preparedness.

The second principle is the interconnection of language skills. Listening, speaking, reading and writing can be practised separately, but learning is more effective when these skills complement one another in the course of a lesson. For example, students first listen to an audio text about nature, then discuss its main content in pairs, identify key words in the text and finally write a five- or six-sentence summary. Such a task activates several language skills simultaneously.

The third principle is text-based teaching. A text is an integrated didactic resource that demonstrates how linguistic units function in authentic contexts. Activities may include selective reading, formulating questions about content, expressing opinions about a character or event, outlining, retelling and editing a text. Methodological literature identifies selective reading, answering questions in one's own words and preparing an outline as techniques that develop reading comprehension and independent thinking [1, pp. 118–120].

The fourth principle is interdisciplinary integration. Using observations from natural science, mathematical tables or historical and cultural information in mother-tongue lessons enables learners to perceive knowledge holistically. For example, students may read information in a weather chart and describe weekly changes in sentences. While comparing numerical data, they also learn to use verbs such as "increased," "decreased" and "remained stable" appropriately. Interdisciplinary connections make lesson content more relevant to real life and demonstrate the practical function of language.

The fifth principle is differentiated instruction. Students in the same class naturally differ in vocabulary, reading speed, writing skills and ability to work independently. Therefore, three levels of tasks can be offered for the same topic: a task supported by key words and questions; a task completed independently; and a creative task requiring an additional argument or evidence. This approach directs all learners towards a shared objective while taking their individual rates of development into account.

The "From Text to Rule" method. At the beginning of the lesson, students read a short text related to the topic. They identify the linguistic units being studied, explain their function in the sentence and then use those units to create a new sentence or text. For example, when studying pronouns, learners identify which nouns or personal names the pronouns in the text replace. They then edit the text by replacing repeated words with appropriate pronouns. This method helps students acquire grammatical concepts in context.

The "Question Ladder" technique supports deeper text comprehension. Questions

progress from identifying basic information to explaining causes, comparing and expressing a personal opinion: “Who or what is discussed in the text?”, “Where did the event take place?”, “Why did the character make that decision?” and “What would you have done in the same situation? Support your opinion with evidence from the text.” This sequence teaches learners to find evidence in a text and justify their answers.

In the “One Topic—Different Texts” task, learners explore the same topic through narrative, descriptive and argumentative forms. For example, on the topic of “Books,” students first narrate an event related to a book, then describe their favourite book, and finally present opinions and arguments about the benefits of reading. The task develops the ability to distinguish text types, select vocabulary and use expressive resources appropriate to the purpose of communication.

The “Editor” exercise is useful for improving written communication. The teacher provides a short text containing deliberate repetitions, gaps in logical sequence or spelling errors. Students first identify the problems, then discuss possible corrections in pairs and explain the revised version. Importantly, the teacher should not merely point out errors but encourage learners to explain why a particular change is necessary.

The “Check the Information Source” task is especially relevant under globalization. Students are given a short text, image caption or announcement on a particular topic and asked to identify who provided the information and for what purpose. In Grade 3, the questions can be simple: “What does the text say?” and “Where did this message come from?” In Grade 4, questions such as “What else do we need to know before trusting this information?” can be added. Learners should be taught that not all information on the internet is necessarily accurate and that they should select reliable sources with adult guidance.

The use of digital tools should be guided by the objectives of the lesson. An electronic dictionary can be used to clarify the meaning of a new word, an audio recording to listen to expressive reading, and an interactive task to check learning. However, technology should not replace direct communication between teachers and

learners. Screen time should be regulated, and the materials used should be age-appropriate. In line with UNESCO recommendations, the pedagogical value of a digital tool, its contribution to equal opportunities and its relevance to educational needs should be considered when selecting it [2, pp. 6–7].

Assessment in mother-tongue lessons should not be limited to counting spelling errors. When evaluating a learner-created text, teachers should consider relevance to the topic, coherence of content, logical sequence of ideas, vocabulary range, adherence to grammatical conventions and achievement of the communicative purpose. If these criteria are explained to learners in simple language before they begin the task, students become more capable of planning and checking their own work.

Specific and developmental feedback from the teacher is essential in formative assessment. Instead of general comments such as “Good” or “Incorrect,” feedback such as “Your main idea is clear, but add a linking word to connect the second sentence to the first” shows learners what they can do next. For peer assessment, the “two strengths and one suggestion” technique can be used: a learner identifies two positive aspects of a partner’s work and suggests one way to improve it.

To monitor the effectiveness of methodological work, a teacher can use diagnostic tasks based on the same criteria at the beginning and at the end of a specified period. For example, students may be asked to write a text of five to seven sentences on a familiar topic. Their work is then analysed in terms of relevance to the topic, coherence, vocabulary range and literacy. Results should be considered not only at class level but also in terms of each learner’s individual progress. The diagnostic example presented in this article is a methodological recommendation and is not reported as an experimental result.

Conclusion

Improving the effectiveness of mother-tongue teaching in primary education under globalization requires a close connection between learners’ knowledge of language and their real-life communication, text comprehension and independent expression of ideas.

To achieve this goal in Grades 3–4, age-appropriate progression, communicative orientation, text-based teaching, interdisciplinary integration, differentiated tasks and the purposeful use of digital tools should be organized as an interconnected system.

The analysis shows that an effective mother-tongue lesson does not merely transmit ready-made rules to learners. It engages them in observing linguistic phenomena, asking questions, finding evidence, exchanging ideas, creating texts and editing their own work. Therefore, when planning lessons, teachers should ensure consistency among content, methods, tasks and assessment criteria. The proposed methodological approaches can contribute to the development of learners' communicative competence, strengthen their conscious attitude towards their mother tongue and prepare them to participate actively in the modern information environment.

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