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FORMING PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' TEXT COMPREHENSION AND ANALYTICAL SKILLS BASED ON THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL PIRLS ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

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Аннотация: В данной статье рассматриваются теоретические основы международного исследования PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) и его роль в развитии читательской грамотности учащихся начальных классов. Анализируются возможности использования заданий формата PIRLS для формирования навыков понимания текста, критического мышления и анализа. В исследовании применялись качественные и количественные методы, включая наблюдение, тестирование и анализ. Результаты показывают, что внедрение методологии PIRLS способствует более глубокому пониманию текста, развитию навыков вывода и аргументации. Также подчеркивается необходимость использования современных педагогических подходов и повышения квалификации учителей.

Ключевые слова: PIRLS, читательская грамотность, начальное образование, понимание текста, критическое мышление, критерии оценивания, международное исследование, методика обучения, качество образования, компетенция

Abstract: This article examines the theoretical foundations of the PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) program and its role in developing reading literacy among primary school students. The study analyzes the possibilities of using PIRLS-based tasks to improve students' reading comprehension, critical thinking, and analytical skills. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were applied, including observation, testing, and analysis. The findings indicate that implementing PIRLS methodologies in the classroom enhances students' ability to understand texts deeply, draw conclusions, and express their opinions effectively. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of modern teaching approaches, teacher training, and integration of international assessment standards into the national education system.

Keywords: PIRLS, reading literacy, primary education, text comprehension, critical thinking, assessment criteria, international study, teaching methodology, education quality, competence

Introduction: One of the most prestigious international programs aimed at assessing students' reading literacy is the PIRLS study. This program is designed to evaluate the level of text comprehension of 4th-grade students and serves to identify their skills in finding information, understanding content, drawing conclusions, and expressing attitudes toward a text. PIRLS tasks, in terms of their content and level of complexity, are aimed at demonstrating students' competencies in working with texts in real-life situations.

Organizing lessons in primary education in accordance with PIRLS requirements creates a foundation for increasing students' interest in reading, developing independent thinking, and ensuring conscious acquisition of knowledge. From this perspective, the use of PIRLS

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methodology requires teachers to adopt new approaches, innovative methods, and effective techniques for working with texts. This article analyzes the theoretical foundations of the PIRLS international study, its role in developing reading literacy, and the possibilities of using PIRLS tasks to enhance reading competencies in primary school students. The research results have significant scientific and practical importance in improving primary education practices and preparing students based on international assessment standards.

PIRLS Program – A Tool for Assessing Reading Literacy: PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) is an international study aimed at assessing the reading literacy of primary school students. This program measures students' abilities to understand texts, analyze, reason, and reinterpret content. Uzbekistan has been participating in the PIRLS program since 2021. The results of the program have highlighted the need to improve reading teaching methodologies, develop students' reading culture, and enhance the qualifications of primary school teachers within the education system. Therefore, a "PIRLS National Center" has been established under the Ministry of Public Education, and practical work is being carried out to train teachers based on international standards.

Research Methodology: The research methodology of this study was organized through a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. First, the theoretical foundations of the PIRLS program and the criteria for assessing reading literacy were analyzed. Then, PIRLS-type tasks adapted for primary school students were developed and implemented in practice to determine their reading competencies. During the research process, observation, testing, questionnaires, and analysis methods were used. The obtained results helped to determine the level of students' skills in understanding, analyzing, and drawing conclusions from texts, as well as to improve the teaching process.

To improve PIRLS preparation in the education system of Uzbekistan, advanced international practices can be gradually implemented:

1. **Strengthening phonetics and basic skills:** Introducing systematic phonics lessons in grades 1–2 based on Singapore's experience, and updating Uzbek language textbooks considering the specific features of the Uzbek language (vowels and consonants).
2. **Developing reading culture:** Based on the experience of Ireland and Finland, organizing reading corners and reading weeks in schools, and conducting seminars for parents.
3. **Developing higher-order skills:** Introducing project-based methods and critical questioning (Why? How do you know?) into lessons based on Russian and English models.
4. **Digital integration:** Activating platforms such as "Kitobxon.uz" and "Bilim.uz" using the experience of Hong Kong and Estonia, and working with digital texts to prepare for the ePIRLS component.
5. **Improving teacher qualifications:** Organizing training sessions for teachers on analyzing PIRLS questions based on the experience of Shanghai (China).

Discussion: The assessment system based on PIRLS criteria has created opportunities for an in-depth analysis of students' reading literacy. While traditional assessment methods evaluate students only based on correct or incorrect answers, PIRLS focuses on students' reasoning, text processing, and analytical abilities. Moreover, assessment criteria allow teachers to analyze students' progress, plan lessons effectively, and update their teaching approaches. This contributes to improving the overall quality of education.

At the same time, there are some challenges, including:
– Some teachers' insufficient understanding of assessment criteria;

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– Difficulties in implementing an individual approach for each student;
– The need to fully integrate PIRLS tasks and criteria into the local education system.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the PIRLS program plays an important role in assessing and developing reading literacy among primary school students. The research results show that lessons organized based on PIRLS criteria effectively develop students' abilities to deeply understand texts, analyze, draw conclusions, and justify their opinions. This enhances students' independent thinking skills and prepares them to work with texts in real-life situations. The PIRLS approach requires teachers to organize lessons using modern methods, apply individual approaches to students, and consider not only the results but also the students' thinking processes during assessment. The identified challenges, such as insufficient understanding of assessment criteria by some teachers and difficulties in fully implementing tasks in practice, indicate the need for future methodological support and training. Overall, the consistent implementation of PIRLS requirements in primary education serves as an important factor in improving students' reading culture, enhancing education quality, and preparing them for successful participation in international assessment programs.

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