THE ROLE OF PEARLS TASKS IN INCREASING THE CREATIVE ACTIVITY OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Qahhorova Sojida Bahodir qizi
Termez University of Economics and Service,
Undergraduate Student, 3rd Year, Group 3/23, Primary Education
Email: sojidaqahhorova123@gmail.com
https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21874089
Tel: +998 77 032 72 04

Abstract: This article analyzes the methodological potential of PIRLS tasks in developing the creative activity of primary school students. The study examines, in relation to creative thinking, students' abilities to comprehend texts, locate information, draw conclusions, identify semantic connections, substantiate their ideas, and express personal responses to texts in the process of developing reading literacy. Based on an analysis of the cognitive characteristics of PIRLS tasks, the study identifies their potential to guide students from reproductive activities toward productive and creative activities. The findings indicate that open-ended, problem-based, analytical, and evaluative tasks have considerable methodological potential for stimulating students' independent thinking and creative approaches. The article also substantiates that systematic use of PIRLS tasks adapted to the content of primary education in Uzbek language and reading literacy lessons contributes to the development of students' cognitive and communicative activity. Particular attention is given to the methodological conditions for using PIRLS tasks and to the ways of integrating them with the content of the national education system.

Keywords: primary education, creative activity, creative thinking, PIRLS, reading literacy, PIRLS tasks, text-based activities, cognitive activity, independent thinking, analytical thinking, productive activity, communicative activity, reading comprehension, task system.

Introduction

In contemporary education, one of the key pedagogical objectives is not merely to ensure that primary school students acquire ready-made knowledge, but also to develop their ability to think independently, find unconventional solutions to existing problems, and substantiate their own viewpoints. In particular, in Uzbek language and reading literacy lessons, the development of students' creative activity is directly associated with the enhancement of their language abilities, cognitive processes, and communicative competencies. In this regard, integrating the methodological approaches of international assessment programmes into primary education has become increasingly relevant.

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) is an international assessment designed to evaluate primary school students' abilities to read, comprehend, analyze, and draw conclusions from texts. Within this assessment framework, students are required not merely to retrieve information explicitly presented in a text, but also to interpret it, identify semantic relationships between different parts of the text, understand the author's ideas, and formulate their own conclusions. Such tasks encourage students to engage in

active thinking and therefore provide methodological opportunities for developing creative activity.

A significant feature of PIRLS tasks is their capacity to activate students' independent engagement with texts. Activities such as analyzing text-based questions, locating evidence, evaluating the development of events, expressing attitudes toward characters' actions, and generating new ideas or conclusions based on the text create conditions for students to move from reproductive learning toward productive and creative thinking. Therefore, the purposeful and systematic use of PIRLS tasks in primary education can contribute not only to improving students' reading literacy but also to developing their creative thinking.

This article analyzes the methodological potential of PIRLS tasks in developing the creative activity of primary school students, their content-related characteristics, and their role in fostering students' independent thinking.

Literature review and methodology

The development of creative activity among primary school students, the formation of reading literacy, and the improvement of text-based skills have been investigated from various perspectives within pedagogy, psychology, and the methodology of Uzbek language and reading instruction. In reviewing the existing scholarly and methodological perspectives, particular attention was given to the methodological views of K. Qosimova, S. Matchonov, X. G'ulomova, Sh. Yo'ldosheva, Sh. Sariyev, and J. Zokirov [3-7] concerning the organization of Uzbek language instruction in primary grades. Their studies pay particular attention to organizing students' reading activities, working with texts, using questions and tasks, and developing students' coherent speech. These methodological approaches provide an important theoretical foundation for understanding the student-centered nature of PIRLS tasks.

The studies of B. R. Adizov devoted to the theoretical foundations of organizing primary education creatively were also considered an important methodological source for this study. His approaches emphasize the creative organization of the educational process, the development of students as active subjects of learning, and the integration of educational content with students' independent activities. From this perspective, creative activity is interpreted not merely as the production of a creative product, but also as a process in which students reinterpret existing information, express their attitudes toward it, draw independent conclusions, and propose new ideas [1].

The methodological perspectives of T. G'afforova concerning the use of modern technologies in primary education were also analyzed. These approaches demonstrate the potential for enhancing students' cognitive engagement through the application of active methods and contemporary pedagogical technologies in the educational process.

Among international studies, the PIRLS 2021 assessment framework developed by I. V. S. Mullis and M. O. Martin is of particular importance. It characterizes reading comprehension in terms of two major purposes of reading—reading for literary experience and reading to acquire and use information—and four cognitive processes: locating and retrieving explicitly stated information, making straightforward inferences, interpreting and integrating ideas and information, and evaluating and critiquing content and textual elements. These criteria are directly related to the development of creative activity, as they facilitate students' transition from simple recall to higher-order thinking [2].

In their studies, J. T. Guthrie and A. Wigfield identify engagement, motivation, cognitive strategies, and students' active interaction with texts as important factors influencing reading comprehension outcomes. Within their conceptual framework, an engaged reader is not merely a recipient of information but an active agent who constructs meaning from the text. This perspective provides a methodological basis for substantiating the characteristics of PIRLS tasks that encourage students to search for information, compare, interpret, evaluate, and draw conclusions.

The research methodology was based on systemic, competency-based, activity-oriented, and text-centered approaches. At the theoretical stage of the study, methods of analyzing, comparing, generalizing, and systematizing scholarly and methodological literature were employed. In examining the content of PIRLS tasks, the principal criteria included the cognitive processes required of students, the level of engagement with the text, the extent to which the tasks encouraged independent thinking, and their potential to elicit creative responses [8-9].

In the practical analysis, PIRLS tasks were classified according to students' activities involving the retrieval of information, making straightforward inferences, connecting different parts of a text, interpreting content, and evaluating textual information. Furthermore, the influence of the tasks on creative activity was assessed based on such criteria as students' ability to express independent opinions, propose alternative answers, relate the content of a text to their own experiences, and formulate new conclusions. On this basis, PIRLS tasks were considered not only as a means of developing primary school students' reading literacy but also as a methodological tool for activating their creative thinking.

Results

The study analyzed the potential of PIRLS tasks to influence the creative activity of primary school students. The findings demonstrated that the didactic value of PIRLS tasks is not limited to determining the extent to which students understand a text. Their methodological significance lies primarily in the extent to which their content encourages students to think on the basis of the text, search for evidence, identify relationships between events, understand the author's position, and express their personal responses.

An analysis of PIRLS tasks according to the characteristics of cognitive activity revealed that they can be conditionally classified into four groups: tasks aimed at locating and retrieving information, making straightforward inferences, interpreting and integrating ideas and information, and evaluating content and textual elements. The first type of task reinforces students' ability to locate and use relevant information from the text. The second type encourages students to understand information that is not explicitly stated in the text. The third group requires students to connect different parts of the text and construct an overall understanding of its meaning. The fourth group creates the greatest opportunities for creative activity because it requires students to evaluate the content of the text, analyze evidence, and express independent opinions [10].

The analysis identified an open-ended response orientation as one of the key characteristics of tasks that promote creative activity. In such tasks, students are not limited to selecting a predetermined answer; instead, they have the opportunity to justify their views, propose alternative solutions, express their attitudes toward characters' actions, or imagine a

different continuation of the events presented in the text. As a result, the reading process develops from reproductive activity toward productive and creative activity [11].

Another finding is that the effectiveness of PIRLS tasks is determined not solely by their level of difficulty but also by the extent to which they stimulate students' thinking. In particular, question structures such as "Why?", "Why do you think this happened?", "What would have happened if the event had unfolded differently?", and "What would you have done if you were in the character's position?" have the potential to activate students' analytical and divergent thinking. Such tasks create a favorable pedagogical environment for creative activity because they require individual reasoning and explanation rather than the reproduction of identical answers [12].

Another important finding is that PIRLS tasks should preferably be used in Uzbek language and reading literacy lessons not as isolated exercises but as an integral component of a coherent system of text-based activities. In this process, students first locate information in the text, then interpret it, establish connections among different pieces of information, evaluate the content, and ultimately formulate an independent conclusion or creative response. Such a sequence makes it possible to gradually increase the complexity of students' cognitive activity [13].

In summary, the findings demonstrate that the purposeful use of PIRLS tasks provides methodological opportunities for developing primary school students' abilities to comprehend texts deeply, think independently, provide evidence, evaluate information, draw conclusions, and express their ideas creatively. In particular, open-ended and problem-based tasks requiring higher-order cognitive processes were found to be effective tools for enabling students to demonstrate their creative potential.

Discussion

The findings indicate that the potential of PIRLS tasks for developing the creative activity of primary school students is closely interconnected with the objectives of developing reading literacy. This result can be interpreted in relation to the principle of developing students as active subjects of learning, which has been emphasized in primary education methodology. While traditional tasks often prioritize locating or reproducing information explicitly presented in a text, the PIRLS approach provides greater opportunities for students to comprehend textual content, integrate different pieces of information, identify implicit meaning, and formulate their own conclusions [14].

One of the important aspects identified in the study is that students' creative activity depends more on the cognitive content of a task than on its external form. For example, even a task presented in the form of a simple question can activate higher-order thinking processes if it requires students to explain a cause, provide evidence, or express an alternative viewpoint. Therefore, when designing tasks, the cognitive operation required of the student is a more important methodological criterion than the formal structure of the question.

This approach is consistent with the concept of reading engagement proposed by J. T. Guthrie and A. Wigfield. These researchers identify students' active interaction with texts, motivation, and the use of cognitive strategies as important factors influencing reading effectiveness. The presence of activities in PIRLS tasks that require students to search for

evidence, compare information, and evaluate content makes it possible to transform students from passive recipients of textual information into active interpreters of meaning.

The cognitive processes identified in the PIRLS assessment framework also provide an important theoretical basis for interpreting the findings of this study. Processes such as locating information and making straightforward inferences constitute the foundation of students' text comprehension, whereas interpreting and integrating ideas and information, as well as evaluating and critiquing content and textual elements, require higher levels of cognitive activity. These processes create the necessary intellectual conditions for students to reason independently, provide evidence, and arrive at new conclusions [15].

At the same time, certain methodological limitations associated with the use of PIRLS tasks should be taken into consideration. Directly transferring any international assessment task into primary school textbooks may not produce the expected results. The content of the tasks should be aligned with students' age-related characteristics, linguistic preparedness, national and cultural experiences, and the existing curriculum. In particular, tasks requiring complex cognitive operations should be introduced and progressively developed in terms of complexity.

The findings demonstrate that the effectiveness of PIRLS tasks increases when they are integrated into students' everyday learning activities rather than used solely as assessment tools. During text-based instruction, teachers can systematically organize stages ranging from locating information to analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating, and creatively reinterpreting textual content. Such a methodological sequence not only enhances students' cognitive engagement but also creates opportunities for them to demonstrate their individual ways of thinking.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that applying PIRLS tasks in primary education should not be viewed solely from the perspective of adopting international assessment criteria. Their methodological potential is determined by their capacity to engage students in searching, analyzing, comparing, evaluating, providing evidence, and generating new ideas. Therefore, adapting PIRLS tasks to the national educational context and integrating them with a system of tasks designed to develop creative activity can be regarded as one of the promising methodological directions for improving the quality of primary education.

Conclusion

The analysis demonstrated that the effective use of PIRLS tasks in primary education can contribute not only to the development of students' reading literacy but also to the activation of their creative activity. In particular, tasks aimed at comprehending textual content, locating information, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, integrating different ideas, providing evidence, and drawing independent conclusions stimulate students' higher-order cognitive activity.

The findings indicate that the effectiveness of PIRLS tasks in developing creative activity depends primarily on their content and cognitive orientation. Tasks that require students not merely to reproduce a predetermined answer but to justify their ideas, propose alternative solutions, express personal responses to textual content, or formulate new conclusions have substantial methodological potential for developing creative thinking.

The study also established the importance of integrating PIRLS tasks into primary education without separating them from the national educational content. The level of task complexity should be adapted to students' age-related and individual characteristics, cognitive processes should be developed progressively, and the tasks should be used systematically when working with both literary and informational texts. Such an approach enables the systematic development of students' activities from reading a text to comprehending, analyzing, evaluating, and creatively reinterpreting it.

Overall, the methodologically grounded and purposeful use of PIRLS tasks contributes to the development of primary school students' independent thinking, analytical approach, communicative activity, and ability to express creative ideas. Therefore, integrating PIRLS-based tasks with exercises designed to develop creative activity can be considered one of the promising directions for improving the content of contemporary Uzbek language and reading literacy education.

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