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DEVELOPING FUNCTIONAL LITERACY OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS BASED ON INTELLECTUAL AND CREATIVE SPEECH SKILLS

Abstract

In the current education system, students' functional literacy holds significant importance. It can serve as a tool for developing competencies and activating students' cognitive activities. The development of a student's knowledge and competencies is closely linked within a unified learning-cognitive process. One of the aspects of this interconnection is the emphasis in school education on forming students' functional literacy as a tool for self-development, in accordance with their interests and abilities. The methodological basis of the research is formed by contemporary school education concepts, the main principles of school pedagogy, the theory of developing communicative skills in teaching, the theory of developing students' functional literacy, and the scientific foundations of communicative education technologies. The sources of the research included state documents on the development of education in Kazakhstan and abroad, scientific works of domestic and foreign scholars on the issue under study, periodicals from Kazakhstan and other countries, materials from scientific-practical conferences, educational programs, and teaching and methodological manuals. During the research, we examined the student's learning process and the formation of students' functional literacy within a unified educational-cognitive process. One aspect of this interconnection is the scientific approach in the educational process, where teaching functions as a tool for understanding the surrounding world and as a tool for self-development in accordance with the student's interests and abilities.

Keywords: functional literacy, primary school, intellectual and creative speech skills, reading, writing, listening, speaking, educational technologies.

Introduction. The modernization of education is driven by changes in contemporary society. In a rapidly changing world, the education system must develop the quality of professional universalism – the ability to change fields of activity and methods of work. At present, society is undergoing global informatization. Modern society needs individuals who can quickly adapt to changes occurring around the world. In these new conditions, the educational process in schools should be aimed at developing competencies that contribute to the implementation of the «lifelong learning» concept. A prerequisite for the development of competence is a certain level of functional literacy.

Functional literacy is one of the key components of modern education, ensuring the successful social adaptation and professional fulfillment of an individual in society. Establishing the foundations of functional literacy in primary school is important, as it is during this stage that basic knowledge and skills are formed. One of the effective methods for developing functional literacy is through the development of intellectual and creative speech skills.

The formation of functional literacy in the educational process today requires new approaches and innovative methods to improve the effectiveness of this process. It must be achieved through the development of intellectual

and communicative abilities, as this contributes to the integrative participation of the individual in broader social processes.

In modern pedagogical science, experience has been accumulated in research on education and training, including studies dedicated to forming students' functional literacy with the help of new educational technologies. All research organically combines psychological and pedagogical approaches to address these issues. A set of psychological and pedagogical methodologies is applied, ensuring the development of new psychological and pedagogical recommendations for fostering functional literacy.

Under the conditions of updated educational content, teaching school subjects involves using communicative teaching technologies aimed at maximizing students' engagement in the educational process. The primary goal is to teach students to think critically, construct speech in multiple languages, analyze, compare, generalize, and draw conclusions. The teaching process should focus on interpersonal interaction and the humanization of pedagogical influence in the educational and instructional process. The foundation of communicative teaching technology includes the practical orientation of school instruction; the communicative-speech basis of the learning process; the integrated organization of teaching materials; a differentiated approach in teaching; and the maximum intensification of the learning process. The communicative teaching method encompasses five principles: the principle of speech-thinking activity; the principle of personalization with a leading role for the personal aspect; the functional principle; the situational principle; and the principle of «novelty».

Functional literacy is increasingly recognized as a fundamental skill necessary for academic success and lifelong learning. In the context of primary education, developing students' literacy skills encompasses not only reading and writing but also the enhancement of intellectual and creative speech skills. As emphasized by Chen, F. (2022), fostering these skills significantly contributes to improving students' overall literacy outcomes.

Developing intellectual and creative speech skills involves promoting critical thinking, creativity, and effective communication among students. According to Smith and Brown (2021), integrating creative arts into literacy education provides a pathway for young learners to engage with texts in meaningful ways. This approach not only enhances comprehension but also encourages students to express their ideas creatively.

Materials and Methods. In his Address to the Nation, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev expressed confidence in the future by stating: «The younger generation must be competitive not only in Kazakhstan but also in other countries» (Tokayev, 2024). Special attention should be given to the level of functional reading literacy among the younger generation, and one of the main ways to achieve this is by developing the functional reading literacy of individuals from primary school onwards, contributing to their further development. The PIRLS international study opens the way for developing children's functional reading literacy.

Through international assessment systems like PIRLS, it is possible to assess primary school students' readiness for life and their level of social adaptation using specific criteria related to each type of functional literacy. Competencies serve as the criteria in this case. Developing functional literacy involves advancing from the traditional primary school model to the rational model and then to the phenomenal model (Aleksashina, 2019). Achieving this goal is expected to place Kazakhstan among the leading countries in terms of the level and quality of education.

Johnson (2020) highlights the impact of collaborative learning on functional literacy. Group activities allow students to practice communication skills and learn from one another, fostering an environment conducive to literacy development. By engaging in discussions and group projects, students develop essential social and cognitive skills necessary for effective communication.

The effectiveness of project-based learning in enhancing functional literacy is further examined by Williams and Lee (2019). This method allows students to engage in hands-on

projects that require them to apply their literacy skills in real-world contexts. Such experiential learning opportunities contribute to deeper understanding and retention of knowledge.

Currently, diagnosing the level of functional reading literacy among primary school students through communicative tasks is linked to the paradigm of competence-based education. The current learning process is primarily based on subject-specific knowledge, and the development of a child's general worldview, life skills, and the focus on expected outcomes are closely tied to fundamental changes in every part of the methodological system of education (Vinogradova, 2017). Therefore, the set of knowledge, skills, and competencies that primary school students must acquire, defined by the competencies they develop, is essential. From an educational perspective, actions aimed at developing a wide range of skills and functional reading literacy are implemented as part of the education process (Vinogradova, Kochurova, & Kuznetsova, 2018).

Assessment plays a critical role in measuring students' literacy development. Garcia (2023) discusses various assessment strategies, emphasizing the importance of formative assessments that provide ongoing feedback to both students and educators. Effective assessment techniques can help identify areas for improvement and guide instructional practices.

Both domestic and international studies play a significant role in the research of functional reading literacy among primary school students. Shuttleworth-Edwards and Peña (2009) found that current developmental theories allow for verification, clarification, and improvement in the formation of literacy. Furthermore, foreign scholars such as Carnoy and Ainley (2015) have extensively examined the sources of important data that determine the success of teaching functional reading literacy in children. Ivanova and Kardanova (2018) analyzed how to ensure and verify the international comparability of the results of functional reading skills assessments in primary school students and their academic performance.

Patel (2022) underscores the significant role of parental involvement in enhancing functional

literacy. Engaging parents in their children's literacy development creates a supportive learning environment that extends beyond the classroom. This partnership is crucial for reinforcing literacy skills at home and encouraging students to practice their abilities regularly.

Incorporating technology into literacy education can also enhance students' engagement and learning outcomes. Thomas (2021) explores how digital tools can be utilized to promote functional literacy and creative speech skills, providing personalized learning experiences that cater to diverse student needs.

The study involved 10 primary school students from one school. The experiment was conducted over one academic year in three stages:

1. Diagnosis of the initial level of students (reading, writing, listening, speaking).
2. Conducting lessons using methods aimed at developing speaking skills.
3. Final diagnosis of students' speaking skills and analysis of the obtained results.

Standard tests and tasks, developed based on curricula and methodological guidelines, were used to assess speaking skills. The test results were processed using statistical methods.

During the research, we applied the following methods: theoretical (analysis, synthesis, classification, generalization, deduction, induction, analogy, and modeling); empirical (observation, surveys, interviews); experimental (diagnostic, developmental, and concluding experiments); and statistical (statistical data analysis, qualitative and quantitative analysis of research results).

The methodological foundation of the research was based on contemporary school education concepts, the main principles of school pedagogy, the theory of developing communicative skills in teaching, the theory of developing students' functional literacy, and the scientific foundations of communicative education technologies. Research sources included state documents on the development of education in Kazakhstan and abroad, scientific works of domestic and foreign scholars on the issue under study, periodicals from Kazakhstan and other countries, materials from scientific-practical conferences, educational programs, and teaching and methodological manuals.

Results.

Table 1. Indicator of high efficiency in using interactive and communicative teaching methods

Skill	Before the experiment	After the experiment
Reading	55%	75%
Writing	50%	70%
Listening	45%	85%
Speaking	40%	88%

The analysis of the results showed a significant improvement in listening and speaking skills, which indicates the high efficiency of using interactive and communicative teaching methods. Students began to perceive and analyze audio information better and expressed their thoughts verbally with greater confidence.

Lin(2020)emphasizestheimportanceofcross-cultural approaches to literacy development in diverse classrooms. Understanding how cultural differences influence literacy practices allows educators to adopt inclusive teaching strategies that resonate with all students.

Preparing educators to effectively foster functional literacy is essential. Kim and Sanchez (2023) highlight the significance of teacher training programs in equipping teachers with the necessary skills to implement effective literacy practices in their classrooms.

The experiment results demonstrated a significant improvement in primary school students' speaking skills. The average levels of skills before and after the experiment are shown

in Table 1. During the study, we examined the student's learning process and the development of students' functional literacy within a unified educational-cognitive process. One aspect of this relationship is the scientific approach in the educational process, where teaching functions as a tool for understanding the surrounding world and as a tool for self-development according to the student's interests and abilities.

1. Assessment of skill levels:

- Before the experiment
- After the experiment

2. Skills:

- Reading
- Writing
- Listening
- Speaking

3. Assessment by percentages:

- Before the experiment:
- After the experiment:

The diagram shows a comparison of skill levels before and after the experiment: reading, writing, listening, speaking.

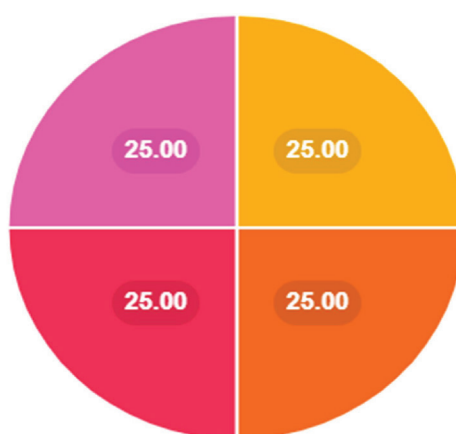


Figure 1: Indicator of the development of functional literacy in primary school students based on intellectual and creative speech skills

The diagram shows the development of functional literacy in primary school students based on intellectual and creative speech skills.

The diagram highlights the balanced attention given to developing reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills.

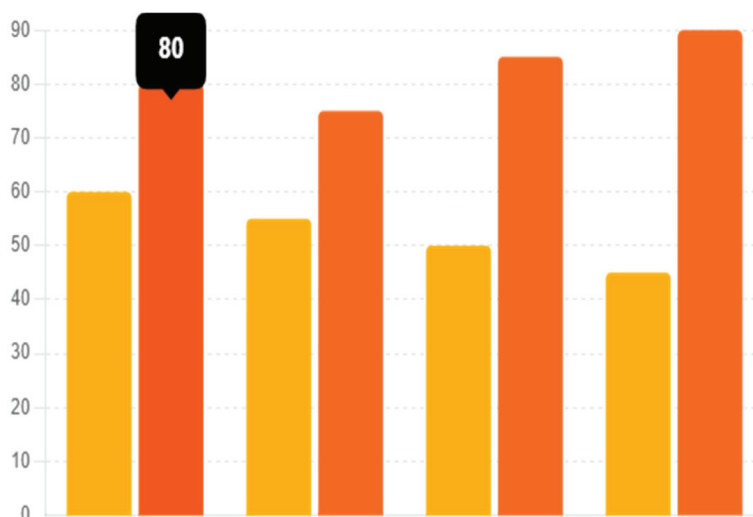


Figure 2: Comparison of the levels of functional literacy development before and after the experiment

The diagram shows the changes in the development of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills before and after the experiment.

It is evident that the results after the experiment significantly improved.

Table 2. Indicator of changes in the development of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills

Student	Reading (before)	Reading (after)	Writing (before)
Student 1	53	78	48
Student 2	59	73	54
Student 3	61	79	56
Student 4	57	81	51
Student 5	60	77	55
Student 6	54	80	52
Student 7	58	74	49

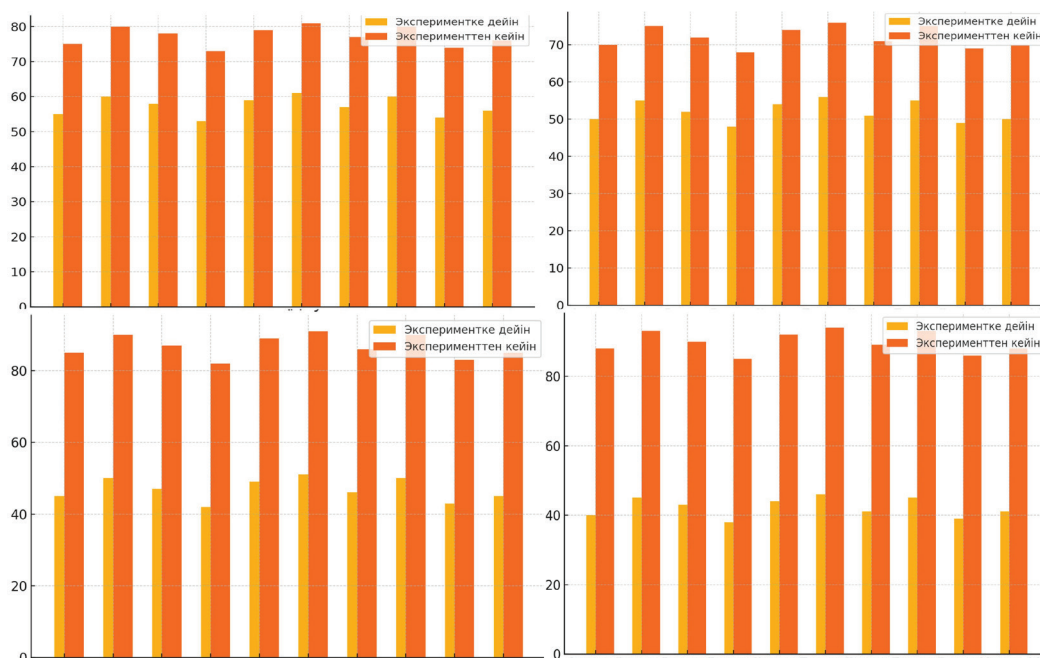


Figure 3: Comparison of students' skill levels in reading, writing, listening, and speaking before and after the experiment

Here are the specific results of the experiment on developing functional literacy in primary school students based on intellectual and creative speech skills. The diagrams show a comparison of students' skill levels in reading, writing, listening, and speaking before and after the experiment. The results of the experiment demonstrate significant improvements in reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills.

In current pedagogical research, the concept of functional literacy is viewed not merely as the ability to read but as the ability to comprehend the meaning of any complex text. In this sense, it is the most important ability that a student must develop in primary school. If this ability is established, further learning becomes easier; if not, further learning may become difficult or even impossible. At present, there are educational tools designed as simulators for functional literacy, containing complex texts written in various languages, accompanied by questions for each text.

It has been established that the foundations of functional literacy are formed in primary school. During this period, the teacher pays special attention to stimulating students' speech activities: learning to speak, listen, read, write, and count. The teacher's targeted and systematic work in this direction contributes to the development of general learning (universal) skills in elementary school students.

In addition, the primary school teacher must cultivate basic competencies (informational, communicative, and reflexive) in students, foster the need for self-development and self-education, and ensure readiness for further education at the next stages.

Discussions. Let us highlight the characteristic features of functional literacy. According to A.A. Leontiev, «a functionally literate person is someone who can use all the knowledge, skills, and abilities accumulated throughout life to solve a wide range of vital tasks in various areas of human activity».

Based on the theoretical and practical experience of researchers at the Institute for Educational Strategy, led by Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences N.F. Vinogradova, we propose a list of methodological

recommendations aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of primary school teachers' work in developing students' functional literacy:

1. Organize the educational process as an activity, focusing on students' ability to learn independently. In this regard, the subject being studied acquires an activity-based nature.

2. Implement the teaching program considering the age and individual characteristics of students.

3. Ensure students' active participation in the learning process.

4. The educational process should be aimed at developing independence and responsibility in students' activities.

5. Use various forms of student work in lessons: individual, pair, and group work.

6. Employ active student-centered technologies in pedagogical activities: problem-dialogue (identifying and solving problems through teacher-organized dialogue), productive learning technologies (organizing learning activities according to the logic of phased work with texts), and project-based technologies (creating posters, models, organizing exhibitions, conducting research).

7. Create problem-based learning situations in lessons.

8. Differentiate the learning process according to levels.

9. Develop students' informational, communicative, and social skills.

10. Evaluate students' educational outcomes and achievements.

I.A. Zimnaya distinguishes three groups of core competencies based on the category of activity and allowing for the assessment of an individual's overall culture: «competencies related to understanding oneself as an individual and as a subject of life» (health maintenance, value orientation in the world, integration, citizenship, self-improvement, self-regulation, self-development, personal and subject reflection, etc.); «competencies related to interacting with other people» (social interaction, communication competencies); «competencies related to human activity in all its forms and types» (competencies in play, learning, work, cognitive activity, and information technology, etc.).

Conclusion. The development of functional literacy among primary school students is a multifaceted process that requires the integration of intellectual and creative speech skills. Through innovative teaching strategies, collaborative learning, and effective assessment techniques, educators can significantly enhance students' literacy outcomes. Furthermore, parental involvement and the use of technology play crucial roles in supporting students' literacy development. As educational practices evolve, ongoing professional development for teachers remains

vital to ensure they are equipped to foster functional literacy effectively.

In conclusion, through conducting a SWOT analysis, it was determined that developing functional literacy based on intellectual and creative speech skills in primary school students offers significant advantages. However, it was also concluded that some challenges need to be addressed through systematic efforts to resolve the issues. For the successful implementation of this initiative, it is necessary to consider all aspects, work on enhancing strengths and utilizing opportunities, eliminate weaknesses, and minimize potential risks.

Table 3. *SWOT Analysis: Developing Functional Literacy in Primary School Students Based on Intellectual and Creative Speech Skills*

SWOT Analysis: Developing Functional Literacy in Primary School Students Based on Intellectual and Creative Speech Skills	
<p>Strengths:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comprehensive teaching approach: Intellectual and creative speech skills include reading, writing, listening, and speaking, ensuring the well-rounded development of students. 2. Early development of core competencies: Primary school provides the foundation for further successful learning and socialization. 3. Increased motivation to learn: Interactive and creative teaching methods make the learning process more engaging and appealing. 4. Enhanced critical thinking and analytical skills: Speech skills contribute to the development of critical thinking, essential for solving real-life problems. 5. Student-centered approach: A personalized approach helps address the needs and abilities of each student individually. 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Time and resource intensity: Developing speech skills requires considerable time and effort. 2. Insufficient teacher training: Some teachers may not be adequately prepared to apply these methods. 3. Lack of available methodological materials: There is a shortage of specialized resources and tools for developing speech skills in primary school.
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction of modern teaching methods: Interactive and communicative teaching methods can help improve students' functional literacy. 2. Government support: Updated education programs and standards are aimed at developing functional literacy. 3. Improvement of educational resources: There is an opportunity to develop new teaching materials based on research outcomes. 	<p>Threats:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dependence on traditional teaching methods: Teachers may be resistant to moving away from traditional methods, slowing the adoption of new approaches. 2. Insufficient material and technical base: A lack of technological resources in schools could reduce effectiveness. 3. Disparity in student readiness levels: Since students' abilities vary, some may face difficulties in mastering the necessary skills.

Thus, the methodological basis for developing functional literacy in students

at the primary general education level is the activity-based approach, which focuses on

creating specific pedagogical conditions to organize students' cognitive independence. This approach includes the use of problem-dialogue teaching technologies, the project method, group work forms in lessons, and interactive tools (informational, electronic-technical, etc.). Specifically, at the primary education stage, students' leading activity is the learning process itself. The teacher should not only provide new information through an explanatory-illustrative method but also personalize the students' learning activities by linking education to various human activities.

The formation of functional literacy among primary school students through the development of intellectual and creative speech skills is essential for fostering comprehensive educational growth. As the research demonstrates, these skills not only enhance students' ability to communicate effectively but also contribute significantly to their overall cognitive development, social integration, and academic success.

By integrating intellectual and creative speech activities into the curriculum, educators can create dynamic learning environments that stimulate critical thinking, encourage collaboration, and promote active engagement among students. These elements are vital in preparing young learners to navigate the complexities of the modern world, where effective communication and adaptability are paramount.

Moreover, the adoption of innovative pedagogical strategies, such as project-based

learning, collaborative activities, and the use of technology, can further enrich the educational experience. Such approaches not only make learning more relevant and enjoyable but also empower students to apply their skills in real-world contexts.

In conclusion, the emphasis on intellectual and creative speech skills as a foundation for functional literacy in primary education highlights the necessity of a holistic approach to teaching. By prioritizing these skills, educators can significantly enhance the quality of education, ultimately leading to the development of well-rounded individuals capable of contributing positively to society. The findings underscore the importance of continuous professional development for teachers to effectively implement these strategies and adapt to the evolving educational landscape. As we move forward, fostering functional literacy through intellectual and creative speech skills should remain a central focus of educational initiatives, ensuring that our students are equipped for success in the 21st century.

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