

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MOTHER TONGUE IN DEVELOPING THE SPEECH OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

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Abstract: *This article highlights the crucial role of the mother tongue in the development of speech in preschool-aged children. Language is interpreted not only as a means of communication but also as a fundamental factor essential for a child's psychological, intellectual, and moral development. The article also theoretically and practically substantiates how, through the mother tongue, a child becomes acquainted with national culture, values, and oral traditions, thereby fostering their development as a personality.*

Keywords: *mother tongue, preschool education, speech, oral speech, psychological development, literature, vocabulary.*

In today's era of globalization, the development of every nation, its spiritual and intellectual wealth, is primarily determined by the attention paid to its language. Language is the historical memory of a people, a cultural heritage, and a key element expressing national identity. Especially in the development of preschool children's speech, the role of the mother tongue is unparalleled. The psychological and intellectual development of children of this age, the enrichment of their inner world, is closely connected to their ability to comprehend the environment through language.

Language is one of the oldest and most important social phenomena of humanity. As a means of communication in society, language also serves as a tool for education, upbringing, thinking, and culture. Preschool educational institutions represent a child's first environment of socialization. In this environment, tasks such as developing children's speech, guiding them toward independent thinking, and helping them understand the surrounding world are carried out. In such a process, the capabilities of the mother tongue serve as the main instrument.

As the first President of our Republic, I.A. Karimov, emphasized: "To develop the Uzbek language, which expresses the national culture and identity of the people, means to fully and consistently implement the status of the language as a state language" [2]. Therefore, respect and attention toward the Uzbek language must be instilled in the consciousness of the younger generation starting from preschool.

A child's understanding and interpretation of events around them through language is linked to psychological processes. Mental processes such as memory, imagination, thinking, attention, and perception are formed and improved with the help of the mother

tongue. In preschool-aged children, language activity, vocabulary, correct pronunciation, and expressive speech contribute to their intellectual and moral development.

Renowned educator K.D. Ushinsky emphasized the role of the mother tongue in child upbringing and recognized language as an essential element of national culture. He described language as containing “numerous philosophical thoughts of deep meaning, truly refined emotions, extremely precise and tasteful aesthetics, traces of concentrated labor and great attention, subtle observations of nature’s phenomena and their delicate nuances, and strong logic...” [3]. According to him, a people’s thought, taste, observance, and spiritual wealth are embodied in language. It is through language that the child begins to absorb this richness.

The main task of preschool educational institutions is to properly develop children’s oral speech and teach them to express their thoughts clearly, concisely, and fluently. In sessions introducing literary works, the use of various didactic games helps develop children’s speech activity.

Children express their emotions, evaluate events in the surrounding environment, and explain their actions through oral speech. This process fosters independent thinking and the formation of social skills. Especially, increasing the vocabulary of preschool-aged children enhances their thinking and imagination.

The mother tongue is not only a tool for communication but also plays a key role in instilling national spirit, patriotism, and humanistic values in children. Through language, the child becomes familiar with the historical experience of ancestors, oral folklore, values, and traditions. Through literary works, proverbs, fairy tales, and wise sayings, the child grows spiritually. This serves as a strong foundation for their development as an individual.

The educator not only imparts knowledge to the child but also teaches them, through language, to think consciously and understand the surrounding world. In every activity, the effective use of the mother tongue, giving clear answers to children’s questions, and guiding them to enrich their vocabulary are the primary tasks of the educator. Especially in oral speech development sessions, it is essential to adopt an individual approach with each child.

In conclusion, the mother tongue is a decisive factor in developing and enriching the speech of preschool-aged children. Through language, the child not only expresses their thoughts but also matures intellectually, morally, and aesthetically. The mother tongue prepares the child for life and leads them into the world of culture and science. Therefore, in preschool educational institutions, attention to language must always remain a priority.

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