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Pragmatic-Didactic Mechanisms for Developing Written Expression Skills Among Primary School Pupils

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ABSTRACT

This article examines pragmatic-didactic mechanisms for developing written expression skills among primary school pupils. The study argues that the development of written speech should not be limited to grammatical, orthographic, or compositional skills alone; rather, it should be closely connected with pupils' awareness of the purpose of writing, the communicative situation, the addressee, content selection, coherent expression of ideas, and revision of the text. The article systematizes the mechanisms of goal orientation, situational adaptation, addressee awareness, content planning, text production, and reflective revision. The experimental work was conducted over eight weeks with pupils of Grades 3-A and 3-B. The findings indicate that written tasks designed on the basis of pragmatic-didactic mechanisms significantly improve pupils' ability to express written ideas purposefully, coherently, appropriately for the addressee, and in a revised form.

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In primary education, the development of pupils' written speech is one of the most important tasks of mother-tongue instruction. Written speech demonstrates not only pupils' knowledge of language rules but also their ability to think independently, present observed and understood phenomena coherently, express personal attitudes, and create texts in accordance with a communicative purpose. In this respect, written speech is an important indicator of the intellectual, linguistic, social, and personal development of a primary school pupil.

In traditional methodological approaches, the development of written speech in primary grades is often associated with the acquisition of spelling rules, sentence construction, writing retellings and compositions, and producing texts according to a plan. These skills are certainly necessary for written speech. However, the process of written expression cannot be reduced only to grammatical accuracy or orthographic literacy. When writing, pupils must also understand what they are writing about, to whom they are writing, for what purpose they are writing, in what situation they are expressing their thoughts, and what effect their text may have on the reader. These aspects constitute the pragmatic essence of written speech.

The pragmatic approach studies language units not only in terms of form and meaning but also in terms of the purposes they serve in a particular situation, by whom, to whom, under what conditions, and with what intended effect they are used. In speech act theory, language is interpreted not only as a means of conveying information but also as a means of performing a particular communicative action (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969). This approach

is especially important in developing written speech among primary school pupils because it teaches the child to express ideas in a way that is situationally appropriate, understandable, coherent, and purposeful.

In written expression, the pupil faces several complex tasks: understanding the topic, identifying the main idea, organizing thoughts, linking sentences, selecting appropriate words, considering the addressee, rereading the text, and revising it. Primary school pupils cannot independently perform all these processes at once. Therefore, purposeful didactic mechanisms are needed in the formation of written speech.

In contemporary education, the development of written speech is also considered a globally relevant issue. Writing competence plays an important role in pupils' academic achievement, logical thinking, reading literacy, communicative activity, and future social adaptation. Writing is a complex cognitive activity that includes the stages of planning, text generation, and review (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Hayes & Flower, 1980). From this perspective, the development and scientific justification of pragmatic-didactic mechanisms for improving written expression among primary school pupils constitute an important pedagogical and methodological problem.

The development of written speech is a complex scientific problem studied at the intersection of linguistics, psycholinguistics, pedagogy, and methodology. In linguistics, written speech is interpreted as the graphic representation of language units, whereas in psycholinguistic approaches it is viewed as a complex activity involving thinking, inner speech, planning, encoding, and text production. From the pedagogical and methodological perspective, written speech is the process of forming pupils' ability to express ideas clearly, logically, coherently, and accurately.

Analyzing the relationship between speech and thought, L. S. Vygotsky emphasized that written speech is a more complex, conscious, and voluntary activity than oral speech. In writing, the child directs ideas not to an immediate interlocutor but to an abstract addressee; therefore, written speech requires planning and control (Vygotsky, 1986). This view supports the need to consider purpose, addressee, and situation in developing written expression among primary school pupils.

P. Y. Galperin's theory of the gradual formation of mental actions can also serve as an important theoretical basis for the methodology of developing written speech. According to this theory, any complex activity is first formed through external practical actions, then through verbal explanation, and later at the level of internal planning (Galperin, 1989). Text production follows the same staged process: the pupil first understands the topic, expresses ideas orally, makes a plan, creates sentences, combines them into a text, and finally revises the written product.

J. R. Hayes and L. S. Flower describe writing as a complex cognitive process consisting of planning, text generation, and reviewing (Hayes & Flower, 1980; Flower & Hayes, 1981). This model is methodologically significant for developing written speech in primary grades because pupils first determine what they will write about, then transform their ideas into sentences, and then reread the text to correct errors and improve content.

Contemporary research on writing instruction emphasizes pupils' conscious regulation of the writing process, their ability to plan, and their capacity for revision as important factors in forming effective written speech (Graham & Harris, 2018; Graham et al., 2012). Self-regulated writing approaches similarly consider goal setting, strategy selection, monitoring, and evaluation as essential stages. These features directly correspond to the content of pragmatic-didactic mechanisms.

Uzbek methodology also treats the development of written speech in primary grades as an important area of mother-tongue education. Written speech is developed through tasks such as retelling, composition, story writing based on pictures, text production according to a plan, sentence linking, and text revision (Matchonov et al., 2021). However, in existing practice this process is often limited to grammatical and compositional requirements, while pupils' pragmatic purpose in text production, consideration of the addressee, and evaluation of the writing outcome are not always sufficiently emphasized. Therefore, the development of pragmatic-didactic mechanisms for written speech remains a relevant methodological task.

The aim of this study is to provide a scientific and methodological justification for pragmatic-didactic mechanisms for developing written expression skills among primary school pupils and to determine their effectiveness in the formation of written speech.

Based on this aim, the following objectives were identified: to analyze the linguistic, psycholinguistic, and methodological foundations of written expression among primary school pupils; to determine the didactic potential of the pragmatic approach in developing written speech; to develop pragmatic-didactic mechanisms that support written expression; to justify the role of purpose, situation, addressee, text production, and reflection in pupils' written speech; and to evaluate the possibilities of improving pupils' written expression skills through pragmatic writing tasks.

The scientific novelty of the study lies in the systematization of pragmatic-didactic mechanisms that contribute to the development of written expression among primary school pupils. A pragmatic-didactic mechanism is understood as a system of methodological actions that direct the pupil, in the process of producing a written text, toward communicative purpose, speech situation, addressee, content planning, and reflective revision. Within this approach, written speech is considered not merely as a set of grammatically correct sentences but as a communicative activity formed through the unity of purpose, situation, addressee, content, text structure, and reflective revision.

The research questions were formulated as follows: What methodological potential does the pragmatic approach have in developing written expression among primary school pupils? How does consideration of purpose, situation, and addressee affect the semantic clarity and coherence of a pupil's text? Do written tasks organized on the basis of pragmatic-didactic mechanisms improve pupils' ability to produce independent texts, present ideas coherently, and revise their writing?

Written speech always serves a particular purpose. Before writing, the pupil needs to answer such questions as "What do I want to write about?", "Why do I want to write?", and "What idea do I want to communicate through my text?" This mechanism helps the pupil begin the writing activity consciously.

Written expression should correspond to a specific speech situation. The same topic may be expressed differently in different situations. For example, the topic "Spring" may be written as a letter to a friend, a story based on a picture, or an appeal to protect nature. Each situation requires the pupil to choose different words, construct sentences differently, and adjust the tone of the text.

In written speech, it is important to understand to whom the text is addressed. A primary school pupil often writes "for the teacher." The pragmatic approach teaches pupils to imagine different addressees: a letter to a friend, a congratulation to parents, advice to a younger sibling, an appeal to classmates, or an explanation to a teacher.

Before producing a written text, the pupil needs to organize ideas. This can be done through questions such as "What will I write about first?", "What idea will I express next?", and "How will I finish my text?" In primary grades, this process may be organized with the help of key words, pictures, questions, diagrams, or clusters.

At this stage, the pupil constructs sentences based on the plan, connects them meaningfully, and turns them into a coherent text. The teacher should not provide a ready-made text but should guide pupils toward independent expression. In text production, the sequence "idea - sentence - connection - text" serves as the main didactic direction.

One of the most important stages in developing written speech is the pupil's return to his or her own text. The pupil checks the text using questions such as "Is my text understandable?", "Are my ideas presented in sequence?", "Is it clear to whom I am writing?", "Is my purpose clear?", and "Which sentence can be improved?"

The study was aimed at determining the effectiveness of developing written expression skills among primary school pupils on the basis of pragmatic-didactic mechanisms. The research employed theoretical analysis, observation, interviews, analysis of pupils' written work, pedagogical experimentation, comparative analysis, and generalization.

The experimental work was carried out over eight weeks. Two written-speech lessons were organized each week, and a total of 16 pragmatic writing tasks were applied. The experiment was conducted with third-grade pupils. A total of 68 pupils participated in the study: 34 pupils were assigned to the experimental group and 34 pupils to the control group. Grade 3-A was selected as the experimental group, and Grade 3-B as the control group.

In the experimental group, written-speech lessons were organized on the basis of pragmatic-didactic mechanisms. Before each writing task, the purpose of the text, the addressee, the speech situation, and the expected outcome were clarified. In the control group, written-speech lessons were conducted through traditional methods: assigning a topic, making a plan, using key words, and checking written work.

Pupils' written work was assessed according to six main criteria: goal orientation, situational appropriateness, addressee awareness, coherence of ideas, text integrity, and reflective revision. Each criterion was scored on a 0-2 scale: 0 points indicated that the skill was not demonstrated, 1 point indicated partial demonstration, and 2 points indicated full demonstration. The maximum total score was 12. Scores of 0-4 were defined as low, 5-8 as medium, and 9-12 as high.

For the experimental group, addressee-oriented, speech-situation-based, goal-oriented, and reflective-revision tasks were developed. For example, a general task such as "Write a text about nature" was pragmatized as follows: "Write a letter to your younger sibling explaining why it is important to protect nature." Such tasks directed pupils not merely to describe a general topic but to perform a specific communicative task.

At the beginning of the experiment, the level of written expression in both groups was identified through diagnostic writing tasks. Pupils were asked to write short texts on topics such as "My Favorite Book," "Advice to My Friend," and "Let Us Protect Nature." The written works were assessed according to the criteria described above.

Table 1. Level of written expression among third-grade pupils at the beginning of the experiment

Class	Group type	Number of pupils	Low level	Medium level	High level
Grade 3-A	Experimental group	34	15 pupils 44.1%	15 pupils 44.1%	4 pupils 11.8%
Grade 3-B	Control group	34	14 pupils 41.2%	16 pupils 47.0%	4 pupils 11.8%
Total	-	68	29 pupils 42.6%	31 pupils 45.6%	8 pupils 11.8%

As shown in Table 1, the levels of written expression among pupils in Grades 3-A and 3-B were almost identical at the beginning of the experiment. This indicates that the initial preparedness of the experimental and control groups was relatively equal.

Table 2. Level of written expression among third-grade pupils at the end of the experiment

Class	Group type	Number of pupils	Low level	Medium level	High level
Grade 3-A	Experimental group	34	4 pupils 11.8%	12 pupils 35.3%	18 pupils 52.9%
Grade 3-B	Control group	34	9 pupils 26.5%	17 pupils 50.0%	8 pupils 23.5%
Total	-	68	13 pupils 19.1%	29 pupils 42.6%	26 pupils 38.2%

The results in Table 2 show that, by the end of the experiment, the proportion of pupils at the high level in Grade 3-A increased from 11.8% to 52.9%. The proportion of pupils at the low level decreased from 44.1% to 11.8%. Positive changes were also observed in Grade 3-B, the control group; however, the growth was considerably lower than in the experimental group.

Table 3. Growth dynamics by written-expression criteria in Grade 3-A, the experimental group

Assessment criteria	At the beginning	At the end	Growth
Goal orientation	14 pupils 41.2%	29 pupils 85.3%	+44.1%
Situational appropriateness	13 pupils 38.2%	27 pupils 79.4%	+41.2%
Addressee awareness	10 pupils 29.4%	25 pupils 73.5%	+44.1%
Coherence of ideas	15 pupils 44.1%	28 pupils 82.4%	+38.3%
Text integrity	12 pupils 35.3%	26 pupils 76.5%	+41.2%
Reflective revision	8 pupils 23.5%	23 pupils 67.6%	+44.1%

Table 3 demonstrates that the greatest growth in Grade 3-A was observed in goal orientation, addressee awareness, and reflective revision. This result can be explained by the fact that, throughout the experiment, pupils were taught to work with guiding questions such as “To whom am I writing?”, “Why am I writing?”, “Is my idea understandable?”, and “How can I improve my text?” before completing each written task.

Table 4. Growth dynamics by written-expression criteria in Grade 3-B, the control group

Assessment criteria	At the beginning	At the end	Growth
Goal orientation	15 pupils 44.1%	21 pupils 61.8%	+17.7%
Situational appropriateness	13 pupils 38.2%	19 pupils 55.9%	+17.7%
Addressee awareness	11 pupils 32.4%	16 pupils 47.1%	+14.7%
Coherence of ideas	16 pupils 47.1%	22 pupils 64.7%	+17.6%
Text integrity	13 pupils 38.2%	20 pupils 58.8%	+20.6%
Reflective revision	9 pupils 26.5%	14 pupils 41.2%	+14.7%

The results in Table 4 show that traditional written-speech exercises in Grade 3-B had a certain positive effect on pupils’ text-construction skills. However, growth in pragmatic skills such as addressee awareness, situational appropriateness, and reflective revision remained relatively low.

Table 5. Overall growth indicators of written expression in Grades 3-A and 3-B

Class	Group type	Average indicator at the beginning	Average indicator at the end	Overall growth
Grade 3-A	Experimental group	35.3%	77.4%	+42.1%
Grade 3-B	Control group	37.7%	54.9%	+17.2%

As shown in Table 5, the overall growth in written expression in Grade 3-A, the experimental group, was 42.1%, whereas in Grade 3-B, the control group, it was 17.2%. Thus, written tasks organized on the basis of pragmatic-didactic mechanisms were more effective than traditional written-speech exercises.

Table 6. Dynamics of mean scores in the experimental and control groups

Class	Group type	Pre-test mean score	Post-test mean score	Mean score growth
Grade 3-A	Experimental group	4.24	9.29	+5.05
Grade 3-B	Control group	4.52	6.59	+2.07

The mean scores presented in Table 6 also confirm the effectiveness of instruction based on pragmatic-didactic mechanisms. In the experimental group, the mean score increased from 4.24 to 9.29, whereas in the control group it increased from 4.52 to 6.59. This shows that the growth rate in the experimental group was higher than that in the control group.

The experimental results indicate that simply assigning a topic and asking pupils to write a text is not sufficient for developing written speech. When the writing process is guided through purpose, situation, addressee, content, and revision, pupils create texts more consciously. This approach produced several positive changes in pupils' written speech: they learned to identify the main idea before writing; elements of address, explanation, and clarification became stronger in their written work; the sequence of ideas and connections between sentences improved; pupils began to pay more attention to rereading and revising their texts; and their interest in writing tasks and independent approach increased.

The discussion shows that pragmatic-didactic mechanisms do not reject grammatical, orthographic, and compositional skills in the formation of written speech. On the contrary, they connect these skills with a communicative purpose. If, in a traditional approach, the pupil performs the task of "writing a text," then in the pragmatic approach the pupil performs the activity of "expressing an idea for a specific purpose, to a specific addressee, in a specific situation." This transforms written speech into a meaningful, life-oriented, and communicatively significant process.

Since this study was conducted with third-grade pupils within an eight-week experimental period, caution is required when generalizing the results to all grades and all educational contexts. In future research, it would be advisable to continue the study with larger samples, across different regions and grade levels, and to assess the development of written speech through long-term observation.

The use of pragmatic-didactic mechanisms in developing written expression among primary school pupils has important scientific and methodological significance. The results of the study show that written speech cannot be limited only to grammatical accuracy, orthographic literacy, or the ability to compose a text according to a plan. Written expression is closely connected with the pupil's awareness of communicative purpose, adaptation to a speech situation, consideration of the addressee, content planning, text production, and revision.

The system of pragmatic-didactic mechanisms proposed in this article enables the process of written expression among primary school pupils to be organized in stages. The goal-orientation mechanism helps the pupil understand why he or she is writing; the situational adaptation mechanism helps align the text content with the situation; the addressee-awareness mechanism improves the clarity and impact of written speech; the content-planning mechanism supports coherent presentation of ideas; and the reflective-revision mechanism helps pupils review and improve their texts.

The experimental results demonstrate that written tasks organized on the basis of pragmatic-didactic mechanisms significantly improve pupils' written expression skills. The increase in the proportion of high-level pupils in the experimental group from 11.8% to 52.9%, and the overall growth rate of 42.1%, confirm the effectiveness of this approach.

On this basis, it is recommended that writing tasks in primary grades be connected with purpose, situation, and addressee; that retelling and composition tasks clearly indicate to whom and for what purpose the pupil is writing; that assessment of written work consider not only spelling and grammar but also purposefulness, coherence, addressee appropriateness, and text integrity; and that special questions and self-assessment sheets be used to develop reflective-revision skills.

In general, pragmatic-didactic mechanisms contribute to the formation of written speech among primary school pupils as a life-oriented communicative activity. This approach ensures not only that pupils write correctly but also that they express their ideas clearly, coherently, purposefully, and appropriately for the addressee.

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