

## METHODOLOGY OF PIRLS RESEARCH IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

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## **Abstract:**

This article examines the ways of preparing junior schoolchildren for PIRLS assignments in literary reading lessons in primary grades. The essence of the international research PIRLS, a comparative analysis of educational systems of different countries and the exchange of experience to improve the quality of reading and understanding of the text by junior schoolchildren of Uzbekistan are revealed. The article pays attention to the importance of developing reading skills, understanding the text and the specificity of mastering this skill by students for further education in high school.

**Keywords**: reading skill, recoding, technical and semantic side of reading, PIRLS, analysis, international research, information search, value judgment, PIRLS structure, interactive tasks, speech development.

## BOSHLANG'ICH SINFLARDA PIRLS TADQIQOTLARINI O'TKAZISH **METODIKASI**

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Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada maktab o'quvchilarini boshlang'ich sinf darslarida PIRLS topshiriqlariga tayyorlash yoʻllari koʻrib chiqiladi. PIRLS xalqaro tadqiqotining mazmunmohiyati, turli mamlakatlar ta'lim tizimini qiyosiy tahlil qilish hamda O'zbekiston maktab o'quvchilarining matnni o'qish va tushunish sifatini oshirish bo'yicha tajriba almashish yo'lga qoʻyilgan. Maqolada bilim olish ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirish, matnni tushunish va o'rta maktabda keyingi ta'lim olish uchun talabalar tomonidan ushbu ko'nikmani o'zlashtirishning o'ziga xos xususiyatlariga e'tibor qaratilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: ta'lim mahorati, o'qishning texnik va semantik tomoni, PIRLS, tahlil, xalqaro tadqiqotlar, ma'lumot izlash, qadriyatlarni baholash, PIRLS tuzilishi, interaktiv vazifalar, nutqni rivojlantirish.

Reading is one of the most important types of speech activity, closely related to both pronunciation and speech understanding. Also, "reading" is the ability to perceive, understand information recorded (transmitted) in one way or another, or reproduce it with technical devices. This is the process of recoding the signs seen and the relationship between its sound and understanding. In the process of reading, two aspects can be identified: technical (method of reading, correctness, expressiveness, speed (pace) of reading) and semantic (understanding



and assimilation of the text). There is a close, inextricable connection between these two sides of the reading process. Considering the above, the technical side of the reading skill includes articulatory development, and the main goal of the reading process is demonstrated by its semantic side. It is the development of the skill of semantic understanding of the text that is an assessment of the acquisition of a full-fledged reading skill. The international PIRLS study was created to identify the development of the semantic and technical aspects of reading. But PIRLS places greater emphasis on the semantic side of the skill.

Requirements and standards in education are increasing every day. To keep up with the times and modern standards, many countries pay great attention to this factor. For example, the comparative analysis of PIRLS meets all the requirements of a modern study of reading and text comprehension skills. PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) is an international comparative study of the quality of reading and text comprehension for 4th grade students, which is conducted under the leadership of the International Association for the Assessment of Educational Achievement (IEA). PIRLS considers two types of reading reading intended to achieve literary reading skills and reading to master and apply information. For control, students are given two works, one of which is a popular science text, and the second is fiction. The result of mastering information is the students' answers to the presented tasks related to the text. Tasks for texts consider four skills - searching for information, the ability to make inferences, explaining and synthesizing information, analyzing and evaluative judgment of content, the specifics of the language structures of the text. This study examines the knowledge of students completing the fourth grade of primary school, since, namely, the fourth year of study is a necessary stage in children's development. Reading is a skill that is not only a narrow sense of manifestation of this meaning, but also a skill on which the success of children's learning in other subjects depends.

The structure of PIRLS is that students are given 10 test alternatives as assignments. These texts are intended for the comprehensive formation and development of the student's speech. In general, 4 literary texts were used in the study: "Inverted Mice", "A Piece of Clay", "Flowers on the Roof", "The Hare Warns of an Earthquake"; 3 popular science texts: "Leonardo da Vinci", "Nights of Dead Ends", "Antarctica"; and the text "On the route along the river", including various forms of presenting information. All test options had the same structure and degree of difficulty. All types of tests consisted of two parts, each of which gave one text and from 11 to 14 tasks for the text. 80 minutes were allotted to complete the work, 40 minutes for each part. The questions do not imply the standard form of a test, but with creative tasks and tests requiring a complete answer, in search of which the student must refer to the text every time and use logical thinking, memory and value judgment.

This, in turn, develops skills such as identifying separately isolated information given in the text;

the ability to draw conclusions from the information received; comment and combine individual text information;

the ability to evaluate the essence, image of language, type of both the whole message and individual information.



The tasks involve the development of speech and the ability to draw analogies, contrast information obtained from the text, practically use the acquired knowledge and information, develop value judgments, that is, to determine the author's message, his main theme of the work, the artistic means that the author used to create his work, assessment of the plausibility of the situation of the described phenomena. From all that has been said, the need to change the pedagogical position and pedagogical communication directly follows. Success depends not so much on how well and interestingly the teacher presents the material. The main resource for development is the experience of reading, listening and discussing, the experience of one's own and others' mistakes and victories.

The maturity of some cognitive and communicative methods of action was assessed based on the results of completing the written final work. These included educational activities that are associated with reading and understanding texts, transforming texts, as well as using information from texts for various purposes. The main actions were semantic reading and logical actions aimed at analysis, generalization, establishing analogies, classification, establishing cause-and-effect relationships, reasoning, inferences and drawing conclusions. But after reviewing the results of an international study, it was found that students had difficulty with some of the PIRLS questions. Namely: lack of skill to use this text to flesh out your idea; discrepancy between personal experience and read information; provided that the task requires a detailed answer, they experience difficulties in expressing their thoughts. To avoid such cases, teachers need to use interactive methods more often in literary reading lessons, which will allow students to get used to this type of activity. Teachers should accept answers from students only in full, expanded form.

Training in the traditional form of developing reading techniques does not always give the desired results. In order for students to begin to get used to interactive tasks like in PIRLS, already from the first grade in literary reading lessons, work is being done to improve reading skills and methods for checking text understanding. In the first years of study, the types of tasks have the following structure: finding accurate information - it can include identifying the main theme and idea, establishing the time and place of an artistic painting, finding the meaning of a single word or a whole phrase, establishing the relationship between phenomena and relationships between characters, realizing what an object or living creature is replaced by a pronoun, summing up the overall picture of the work.

Towards the end of primary school, assignments for works become more complex and have a distinctive structure. They already require more analysis of what they read and work on their own conclusion. The tasks imply the development of skills to draw analogies and contrast information obtained from the text, to practically use the acquired knowledge and information, the development of value judgments, that is, to determine the author's idea, his main theme of the work, the artistic means that the author used to create his work, assessing the credibility situations of the described phenomena. In the Republic of Uzbekistan, with the joint efforts of the Ministry of Education, suitable conditions are being created, as a result of which the opportunity to prepare and exchange experience in international analysis on quality control of educational systems, development of speech, reading skills and logical thinking in primary school students is provided.



Pedagogical requirements for speech development through PIRLS tasks: focus on ensuring the construction of the content of the academic subject, taking into account the orientation towards self-knowledge, personal self-development based on a competency-based approach, the implementation of which occurs through the main content component of the subject - an educational task aimed at developing the ability to solve standard educational tasks, and also tasks of interaction with society based on predominantly practice-oriented knowledge (data, information, scientific concepts, instructions, skills in working with tables, graphs, interpretation and collection of information). The teacher's use of innovative technologies for teaching the organization of independent activities of students, initiating independence in determining goals, planning and awareness of their own actions.

Therefore, in order to achieve a good level of student speech development, first of all, additional tasks should be designed at a certain level, guaranteeing an increase in students' motivation and the formation of basic competencies.

To date, the international comparative study PIRLS, the object of assessment of which is the reading comprehension of primary school students, remains the most authoritative and high-quality, its methodology is recognized by leading experts in this field in all countries, and the results are carefully analyzed. The Russian Federation took part in all cycles of the study: in 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016, and it was decided to take part in the next cycle (2020—pilot study, 2021—main study). After the announcement of the results of each cycle, Russian specialists carefully analyzed the results, and the data obtained were actively discussed [2; 5; 6; 7; 9]. In the modern world, the reading process of both adults and schoolchildren is constantly undergoing changes, the Russian education system is developing dynamically, in these conditions, during the period of preparation for participation in the next cycle, and in order to analyze the situation with reading literacy in principle, it is important to once again return to the results of previous cycles, try to learn lessons and prevent a decline in the quality of reading comprehension of Russian primary schoolchildren.

Let us analyze the dynamics of Russian results in previous cycles of the PIRLS study—this is important to do to compare the results and the changes that occurred in Russian primary education in those years.

As can be seen from the data presented, from 2001 to 2016 there has been a steady positive trend in improving the reading literacy of Russian primary schoolchildren. At the same time, we emphasize that a significant qualitative increase in results occurred from 2001 to 2006. This is very important to note, because... Among the reasons for this improvement in results is the mastery by younger schoolchildren of methods of work when assessing reading literacy. In 2001, the format of the PIRLS tests was unusual for graduates of Russian elementary schools, since traditionally the skill of conscious reading was assessed only during frontal work in the classroom in the format of oral responses to the text read. Finding themselves in a one-on-one situation with a written test, during which it was necessary to give short and detailed written answers, primary schoolchildren were unable to demonstrate their inherent level of reading literacy. After the analysis of the results, printed notebooks appeared in the practice of Russian elementary schools, in which students were asked to write down their answers to questions about the texts. In addition, control and evaluation materials based on the PIRLS model have



appeared. It is important to emphasize that this process took several years, and it was not immediately possible to find a balance between oral responses, which are certainly preferable when working on reading literacy, and written responses, which are also necessary.

The very definition of the PIRLS study clearly establishes the connection between reading and writing as two types of written language: "Reading literacy is the ability to understand and use a variety of forms of written language that are in demand by society and/or are valuable to the individual. Based on a variety of texts, readers construct their own concepts. They read to learn, to participate in school and extracurricular reading communities, and for pleasure" [2; 9; eleven]. In the modern world, people use written communication quite actively, and this requires the development of writing skills. The mastery by Russian junior schoolchildren of a certain way of working when discussing read texts was one of the factors that ensured improved results. It was important to remember the reasons for the results in 2001 and the "breakthrough" in 2006 now, since the PIRLS study is moving towards electronic reading. Every effort should be made to ensure that format changes do not result in poorer reading scores. At the same time, it is important to take into account the negative experience of past years, when, in pursuit of a new format, some "distortions" were allowed in the organization of work in the classroom. But it would be unreasonable not to respond at all to the demands of the time related to the fact that modern people very often read texts from the screen. Thus, one of the challenges facing the pedagogical community is to find answers to the question of how to preserve the existing methodology for working on reading literacy based on "paper" texts and supplement it with elements of screen reading and recording answers to questions on the texts read using the keyboard.

Another period when there was a significant qualitative increase in results was the period between the 2011 and 2016 cycles. Among the reasons for the qualitative increase in results is the transition to the new Federal State Educational Standard of Educational Education, in which reading literacy is designated not only as a subject result in "Literary reading", but also as a meta-subject result [8]. It is important to pay attention to the fact that when formulating subject results in the 2009 Federal State Educational Standard, the need to work with different texts was clearly indicated: "achieving the level of reading competence and general speech development necessary for continuing education, i.e. mastering the technique of reading aloud and silently, elementary techniques of interpretation, analysis and transformation of literary, popular science and educational texts using elementary literary concepts" [8]. Currently, a very dangerous situation has arisen: in the version of the updated standard discussed in 2018–2019, the requirements for learning outcomes in the subject "Literary Reading" recorded in paragraph 36.1 apply only to literary texts. This fundamentally distinguishes the discussed version of the Federal State Educational Standard for the better from the current standard. The planned results for "Literary Reading" given in the appendix also reflect work only with literary texts. If changes are not made to indicate working with different texts, including informational ones, Russian schoolchildren may lose their leading position in PIRLS. In the period from 2011 to 2016, positive experience was accumulated in working on reading literacy as a meta-subject result. It is important to continue to analyze what is already being achieved and to develop



recommendations for improving reading literacy in each subject in the process of teaching primary schoolchildren.

Analysis of the results of previous cycles of the PIRLS study, despite Russia's leading positions in the cycles of 2006, 2011 and 2016, made it possible to identify some difficulties faced by Russian students. It is very important to pay attention to this difficulty: Russian primary schoolchildren, when answering questions that require accuracy, do not always demonstrate the ability to refer to the text and clarify any information, but limit themselves to an approximate, inaccurate reproduction of information based on "recall". Students have difficulty distinguishing between information provided in a text and information they have based on their personal experience. Another difficulty arises when answering questions that require a detailed answer: even in a situation where elementary school graduates understand what they read well, they find it difficult to express their own thoughts in writing. In fairness, we emphasize that this is not easy for older students, but it would be advisable to think through a methodology for including such a form of work as a very short written answer in lessons in all subjects.

Let us draw attention to another difficulty of younger schoolchildren, which was recorded in all the research cycles conducted. These are the difficulties of demonstrating such skills as searching for information presented explicitly in the text. Despite the apparent simplicity of this skill, in modern conditions it is at risk. This is also due to the characteristics of modern children - psychologists, physiologists, psychoneurologists talk about the "mosaic" nature of perception, in which children cannot always focus on details, which also manifests itself when reading texts. This includes the active use of skimming reading in everyday life, when even a primary school student works with large amounts of information, and the balance of skimming and studying reading strategies is not always maintained. The latter requires tenacity of perception. What determines the difficulty of questions, in answering which the reader is helped by the ability to find information in the text that is communicated explicitly? The difficulty of such questions is primarily influenced by: "the degree of (un)familiarity of the content of the text; the volume of that fragment of text that needs to be remembered or reread when searching for an answer; the presence or absence of an exact indication in which part of the text to look for the answer; the coincidence of the verbal formulation of the question and the desired answer (the need to make synonymous substitutions complicates the reader's task); the presence or absence of the reader's intention to double-check (prove) his answer in the text" [9, p. 63]. It is very important that teachers, throughout their entire education in primary school, continue to work on developing this skill in younger schoolchildren, constantly analyze whether there are enough questions that require the manifestation of this skill, they ask whether the complexity of these questions changes (synonymous substitutions, addressing different parts text, etc.).

One of the recommendations related to the analysis of the results of previous cycles is to improve the meaningful assessment of the results of junior schoolchildren. According to the current Federal State Educational Standard of NEO 2009, the educational organization itself develops an assessment system and regulations on control and evaluation in all subjects. It would be very useful when assessing the achievements of junior schoolchildren in reading literacy, when developing various formative assessment methods, to use the level scale



proposed in the PIRLS study, in which the qualitative characteristics of the levels of text comprehension by primary schoolchildren are developed in detail. These characteristics show how readers who have reached a certain level of reading literacy understand the text, and what they have learned to do in order to understand what they read. The description of the levels applies to all types of texts used.

In addition to improving the quality of feedback from students and parents, the use of a description of reading literacy levels makes it possible to describe in more detail the goals of a literary reading course in primary school and to develop educational and methodological materials for this course that meet international standards.

When analyzing the results of previous cycles of research, the connection between a number of factors related to the characteristics of Russian primary education, the characteristics of how teachers organize the process of teaching reading, and the overall results of students was studied. As a result, in the last three cycles of the study, similar factors influencing the high achievements of Russian junior schoolchildren in PIRLS were identified. Here are some of them:

- preservation in Russian society of the traditionally inherent value of working on reading literacy, preservation among parents, teachers and junior schoolchildren themselves of an attitude towards expanding the range of reading, improving reading skills, supporting high motivation for reading at the family and school level;
- the interest of parents in ensuring high-quality preparation of children for school, active activities between parents and children, providing a solid foundation for mastering the skill of reading, and in some cases, mastering this skill before school;
- a rational combination of the achievements of domestic methods of teaching reading and innovations dictated by changes in the lives of primary schoolchildren and the entire Russian society, the introduction of new text formats into textbooks;
- -the presence of thoughtful scientific and methodological approaches to working with students with reading difficulties, the use of differentiated work, the focus of which is more on children at risk.

At the same time, critical points were also identified that, without proper attention to them, could lead to a decrease in the level of reading literacy of Russian primary schoolchildren. Let us draw attention to the need for such changes:

– increased attention to the development of methods for helping the strongest readers in their further advancement, the development of various types of tasks that will help such students move to the next levels of reading literacy; – special attention to schools where the majority of first-graders do not have the skills necessary for a successful start to education; – further development of methods of helping boys, since their results continue to remain lower than those of girls.

Another area of work that is important to propose based on the results of the PIRLS study is the creation of self-assessment and self-analysis methods for teachers, which would allow them to help them understand their own teaching methods, their strengths and weaknesses. The PIRLS study questionnaires contain very interesting material that can serve as the basis for such methods. Here are examples of some questions from the teacher's questionnaire.



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