

## METHODOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING READING LITERACY AND ESSAY WRITING SKILLS IN UZBEK LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

This article discusses the issues of developing students' reading literacy and essay writing skills in Uzbek language education. The author substantiates the interrelated nature of listening, reading, speaking, and writing skills in language teaching. The article provides a scientific and methodological analysis of effective ways to organize listening activities, criteria for selecting educational materials, and principles for designing tasks.

**Keywords:** Pronunciation, listening, skill, task, essay, story, text, monologue, intensive

### INTRODUCTION

A teacher cannot eliminate all the difficulties associated with listening comprehension. However, the teacher should help make this task easier and more engaging for learners. In order to ensure the development of listening skills, the teacher should take into account the following three factors:

1. Pronunciation or intonation.
2. The content of the material recommended for listening
3. The form of the material and the conditions in which it is presented.

If the teacher uses material that has already been mastered by students, listening comprehension becomes possible; however, this does not completely eliminate the difficulties in listening. The content of the material also affects comprehension. The topic of the message should fall within the learners' comprehension capacity. Difficult elements such as proper names, geographical names, and terminology should be explained.

Descriptions are more complex than narratives. Therefore, students' readiness to understand them is very important. The title of a story can help in understanding the main ideas of the text. Monologic speech is easier, and it is advisable to pay attention to this as much as possible in Uzbek language classes.

Expressive conditions are of great importance: the speed of speech and repeated presentation of the material. Students should be taught to listen to the text in real time. However, sometimes they may understand only about 70 percent of the information, or even less; therefore, a second presentation may be useful. The presence or absence of the speaker is also an important factor. The teacher uses these methods in developing listening skills.

1. Conducting lessons in a specialized classroom provides the teacher with the opportunity to create a favorable environment for students to develop speech skills and to use language as a means of communication through listening.
  2. The teacher also uses more speech exercises at school to develop listening comprehension.
- Instructions for organizing listening activities include the following.

## 1. Listening to texts.

Informal conversation. The texts selected for listening should not be pre-prepared and should be based on natural speech. The visibility of the speaker and the direct interaction between the speaker and the listener are important. In most cases, audio recordings are used for listening exercises. If the teacher creates listening texts independently for students, this is beneficial for them. The use of video materials also contributes positively to increasing lesson effectiveness.

## 2. Listening tasks

Prediction. Students need to have a preliminary idea about the type of text they will hear. Therefore, simply instructing “listen to the statement” is less useful than giving a context such as “you will hear a husband and wife discussing their plans for the summer,” which helps them understand facts, episodes, and events.

Purpose is also important. Listening should be guided by clearly defined tasks that require students to find specific answers. For example, instead of saying “listen and understand everything,” it is more natural and easier to say “listen and find out where the family will go for their summer vacation.”

Immediate response from the listener is also necessary. The task should include responses during listening so that students do not wait until the end but react to the information as they hear it. Before students are asked to listen to a text, the teacher should ensure that all the words are familiar to them. If there are important unfamiliar words, the teacher introduces them in advance, for example, on the board in the order they appear in the text. Then the teacher should focus students’ attention on what they are going to listen to. This encourages their thinking and helps them understand the text.

Pre-listening tasks that stimulate students’ attention include:

1. Trying to understand the main idea.
2. Creating a plan for the story.
3. Attempting to complete the story.

Visual aids may also support comprehension. After listening, the teacher may ask questions, and students may agree or disagree with statements about the text.

Both types of listening are especially important because they provide learners with opportunities to hear voices other than the teacher’s, help them develop good habits of spoken language, and improve their pronunciation.

Extensive listening involves encouraging students to choose what they listen to for enjoyment and general language improvement. Extensive listening usually takes place outside the classroom, and materials can be found from various sources such as books, songs, and videos. Intensive listening involves working in detail with recorded materials, which are used at different stages of the learning process.

**There are different types of listening activities:**

1. In activities with no response, students are not required to do anything in response to the audio. These may include **stories**, anecdotes, retelling well-known stories, reading stories from books, or listening to recorded stories. If the story is well chosen, students will enjoy listening to it.

Entertainment materials such as **films, theater, and videos** also function similarly; if the content is truly engaging, students will try to understand it without the need for additional tasks.

2. Short-response activities include following instructions, where students perform actions or draw shapes or pictures based on commands.

**Identifying errors**, where the teacher tells a story with deliberate mistakes and students react when they hear incorrect elements.

**Prediction**, where the teacher describes a person, place, object, or action and students write down their assumptions.

3. Longer-response activities include answering questions that require more detailed responses, which are often more convenient in written form, and summarizing, where students write the content of what they have heard, sometimes filling in gaps left at the beginning, middle, or end of the text.

4. Extended-response activities involve integrating multiple skills such as reading, writing, and listening into one activity. A problem may be presented orally, and students discuss how to approach it or write a proposed solution. A fragment of a monologue may be presented without prior context, and listeners try to infer meaning from words, voice types, and subtle clues about events. At a more advanced level, parts of literature suitable for reading aloud, such as poems, may be discussed and analyzed.

The stimuli used by teachers to develop students' speaking skills are often weak and artificial. There should be situations in which students genuinely want to tell someone something, explain something, or prove something to someone, which reflects a situational-communicative approach. Among the four skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—teaching intuitive speaking is the most important. International language teaching practices also show that learners primarily feel the need to develop speaking skills first. Since learners already have some level of speaking ability in Uzbek, they strive to develop correct and literate writing skills. Teaching phonetics can also help students learn to construct coherent texts. In doing so, students learn to support their ideas with wise sayings and to connect sentences logically.

**Task 1:** *Connect the following three sentences logically and provide a written explanation of phonetic changes related to consonants.*

1. In human life, the most necessary knowledge is self-awareness. 2. Your main rivals exist within yourself: laziness, fear, hesitation, and indecisiveness. 3. Fate is not the result of random circumstances but the result of choice; it is not something to wait for, but something to create" (B. Fontenelle).

**Task 2:** *Combine the following two ideas with a third idea of your own (or from another source). From the resulting text, identify words whose pronunciation and spelling do not match.*

1. Patience brings us closer to our goal, while imagination distances us from it" (J. Dubé). 2. No one knows the extent of their strength without applying it in practice" (Goethe).

**Task 3:** *Explain what phonetic phenomena are present in the sentence. Which sounds have distinct features? On what basis do most sounds share a common characteristic? Attention is the only gate of our soul, through which everything that exists in consciousness immediately enters" (K. Ushinsky).*

**Task 4 (Homework):** *Write ten figurative expressions along with their synonyms. Provide examples from proverbs and aphorisms, and then conduct their orthographic analysis.*

As noted, it is appropriate to use phraseological units as analytical material in teaching Uzbek. One of the main tasks of Uzbek language lessons is to teach each student to use the language effectively. As the proverb says, “The beauty of speech lies in proverbs.” In addition to wise sayings, proverbs, and aphorisms, phraseological units are also powerful linguistic tools and can serve as key materials in phonetics instruction. They can be used as analytical material when teaching any topic.

**Task 1:** *Replace the given phraseological units with words of equivalent meaning and compose sentences using the selected ones. Identify consonants that become devoiced in pronunciation.*

Qo‘li ochiq – generous, open-handed; ko‘zi to‘q – content, not greedy; bo‘yi yetgan – mature, grown-up; ko‘ngli oq – kind-hearted, pure-hearted; og‘zi katta – big-mouthed, boastful; ko‘z ochib yumguncha – in the blink of an eye; oyoqqa turib – back on one’s feet; ko‘ngli g‘ash – upset, in low spirits; belini mahkam bog‘lab – brace oneself, prepare seriously; ko‘z ilg‘amas – barely visible, too fast to notice; ko‘z tutmoq – expect, look forward to; ko‘z boylash – deceive, create an illusion; ko‘z tashlamoq – glance, take a quick look; ko‘zingga qara – watch yourself, be careful; oyog‘ini qo‘liga olib – run very fast, rush; ko‘zi ochilmoq – realize, become aware

**Task 2:** *Copy the phraseological units and identify words with consonant clusters.*

1. They were such close friends that nothing could come between them. 2. Even if he goes into a mill, he comes out whole (safe and unharmed). 3. The Uzbek eagerly waited for his son with great longing. 4. One has to rack one’s brain over a thousand different problems. 5. Let us all join forces and work together. 6. “Why aren’t you saying anything? You saw it, didn’t you?” said To‘la.

**Task 3:** *Read the phraseological units, explain their meanings, find synonyms, and indicate logical stress.*

1. G‘ulomjon returned to the village embarrassed and disappointed. 2. Sattorov began to panic and fidget like a scalded chicken. 3. The old man was suddenly left speechless. 4. Saida lowered her head. 5. They were so busy that they did not even have time to scratch their heads. 6. Everyone was left open-mouthed. 7. Hamid worked with great dedication.

**Task 4:** *Find words equivalent in meaning to the phraseological units, determine the number of open syllables, and describe the place of articulation of consonants.*

1. Strong enough to crush a mountain. 2. Did not pay attention. 3. Was frightened out of his wits. 4. Shares even a single raisin equally. 5. Quick and agile. 6. Rolled up one’s sleeves (ready to work hard). 7. Makes a big show of things / exaggerates unnecessarily.

**Task 5:** *Fill in the blanks with words equivalent to the phraseological units and determine in how many words phonetic changes occur.*

1. Ko‘ngli joyiga tushdi – calmed down. 2. Tepa sochi tikka bo‘ldi – was terrified / hair stood on end. 3. Xamirdan qil sug‘urganday – very easily. 4. Tekkanga tegib tegmaganga kesak otadi – quarrelsome / picks on everyone. 5. Tutgan eridan kesadi – decisive / firm in actions. 6. Aravani quruq olib qochadi – boastful / exaggerates. 7. Eti suyagiga yopishgan – very thin / skinny. 8. Erga ura ko‘kka sapchiydi – extremely lively / energetic. 9. Qo‘y og‘zidan cho‘p olmagan – very gentle / harmless.

quick to take offense	resourceful	boastful
easy	calmed down	thin
got angry	gentle	playful

**Task 6:** *Use the given expressions both as free word combinations and as phraseological units, composing two sentences for each, and identify phonetic alternations.*

1. Bo'yniga ilmoq – to take responsibility upon oneself. 2. Tarvuzi qo'ltig'idan tushmoq – to become embarrassed / disappointed. 3. To'nini teskari kiymoq – to turn against someone. 4. Qo'li ochiq – generous. 5. Tosh otmoq – to criticize / throw blame. 6. O'z yog'ida qovrilmoq – to be self-sufficient / manage on one's own. 7. Qulog'iga quymoq – to instill firmly (into someone's mind).

**Task 7:** *Write the given phraseological units together with their equivalent words.*

1. Gap tashiydi – carried the conversation / made an impression. 2. Gap ko'tarmaydi – words hold no weight / it's meaningless to argue. 3. Gapning tagiga etdi – got to the point / emphasized the main point. 4. Jonini hovuchladi – gathered courage / put heart into it. 5. Boshi qotdi – became stubborn / refused to change one's mind. 6. Pesho'zbeksi tirishdi – struggled / worked hard. 7. Yuzi shuvut bo'ldi – his/her face became expressionless. Chaqimchi – startled, aniqladi – realized, adashdi – got confused, arazladi – got annoyed, qo'rqdi – got scared, o'ylandi – pondered, g'azablandi – got angry, uyaldi – felt ashamed.

**Task 8:** *In groups, provide examples of phraseological units related to body parts; the losing group identifies words written in phonetic transcription.*

**Task 9:** *Read the expressions, explain their meanings, and classify words according to phonetic and morphological principles.*

1. Yuzini teskari qilsin – turned his/her face away. 2. Ko'z ostiga oldi – kept an eye on / watched closely. 3. Quloq solmadi – didn't listen / ignored. 4. Qulog'idan kun ko'rinadi – easy to read / clearly shows feelings. 5. Qulog'iga ildi – whispered into the ear / gave advice secretly. 6. Burni ko'tarilgan – became arrogant / got a high nose. 7. Burnidan chiqdi – lost patience / got fed up. 8. Burnidan baland gapirib bo'lmaydi – cannot speak arrogantly / cannot boast.

**Task 10:** *Identify phraseological units in sentences and try to replace them with synonyms.*

1. Burnidan ip o'tkazib olgan – completely under someone's control / utterly obedient. 2. Og'ziga talqon soldi – spoke harshly / scolded severely. 3. Og'zi kuydi – regretted / felt remorse. 4. Tishining kirini so'ryapti – gritting teeth / enduring resentment. 5. Tishini tishiga qo'ydi – fought back / defended oneself fiercely. 6. Tishining oqini ko'rsatdi – showed strength / displayed courage. 7. Tishining kavagida saqladi – kept a secret / held a grudge.

**Task 11:** *Find homonymous phraseological units and identify types of phonetic changes.*

1. Qulog'iga ildi – whispered in the ear / persuaded secretly. 2. Og'zi kuygan – embarrassed / ashamed. 3. Og'ziga talqon soldi – scolded severely / spoke harshly. 4. Boshi devorga urildi – met with failure / got frustrated. 5. Bo'yniga ilmoq – trapped / caught in a difficult situation. 6. To'nini

teskari kiymoq – act recklessly / do something absurd. 7. Tosh otmoq – throw stones / criticize or blame. 8. Qulogʻiga quydi – whispered in the ear / gave secret advice. 9. Qoʻli ochiq – generous / open-handed.

**Task 12:** *Read the expressions, explain their meanings, and identify cases of sound deletion.*

1. Tilini tiydi – held back one's tongue / kept silent. 2. Tili kuydi – regretted speaking / felt ashamed of what was said. 3. Tilining uchida turibdi – on the tip of the tongue / almost said it. 4. Tilini tishladi – bit one's tongue / restrained from speaking. 5. Boʻyniga ip bogʻladi – got into trouble / trapped oneself. 6. Boʻyniga ildi – was caught / trapped. 7. Boʻynini qisdi – felt constrained / in a difficult situation. 8. Tomogʻi tushdi – got choked / nervous or shocked. 9. Tomogʻini moyladi – gave in / yielded reluctantly.

**Task 13:** *Group the expressions using the “cluster” method.*

1. Elkamning chuquri koʻrsin – may you feel the burden / suffer. 2. Elkasi tirishdi – worked hard / made a great effort. 3. Elkasiga shayton mindi – got angry / lost patience. 4. Elkasidan togʻ agʻdarildi – overwhelmed / burdened beyond capacity. 5. Orqa oʻgirdi – betrayed / went behind someone's back. 6. Orqa qildi – turned one's back / abandoned. 7. Qoʻl etmadi – couldn't manage / failed to do. 8. Qoʻli uzun – generous / influential. 9. Qoʻli qisqa – stingy / unable to reach. 10. Qoʻlini paxsa qildi – gave up / did nothing. 11. Qoʻlini yuvib qoʻltigʻiga urdi – washed hands of it / shirked responsibility. 12. Qoʻli qichidi – eager to do / itching to act.

**Task 14:** *Find antonyms of the expressions and determine which type of phonetic change is most frequent.*

Qoʻli egri – crooked-handed / dishonest, qoʻli engil – quick-handed / thieving, qoʻli shirin – skillful / clever-handed, qoʻli gul – generous / giving-handed, qoʻl uchida kun koʻradi – lives by one's hands / works hard for a living, pichogʻi yogʻ ustida – knife is sharp / adept with a knife, yuragi yoʻq – heartless / cruel, yuragi baquvvat – strong-hearted / courageous, yuragidan urdi – struck from the heart / hit emotionally, yuragi jiz etmadi – fearless / undaunted.

**Task 15:** *Provide examples of phraseological units related to body parts and identify open syllables.*

**Task 16:** *Read the text expressively, underline the phraseological units, and determine the number of syllables consisting of a single sound.*

Improving Uzbek language teaching through exercises and tasks leads to the formation of students' competencies defined in educational standards, including communicative competence. Working with texts plays a significant role in developing independent thinking skills in students. However, tasks related to the content of the text should be meaningful and thought-provoking. For example, a text for seventh-grade students was selected for logical analysis and tested in practice.

Task 1.

Read the text carefully and answer the two attached questions. Support your thoughts with reasons.

“Hey, Skripka!” – It was Petya’s voice, and immediately a rattling sound could be heard. Yanguli had slapped Petya’s face. I didn’t look back – I was crying, but I didn’t want the children to see my tears. I was crying, yet I felt inside that I had won today’s scuffle.

At dawn, while it was still dim and blurry, I stood in front of the Alexandridis’ gate. Khristo would strike the donkey with a whip, and Yanguli would help him. When he saw me, he came over.

“So, have you come to complain?” – he asked, nodding toward his father. Khristo, sitting in the back, didn’t notice me.

“Who’s calling?” – he shouted without taking his eyes off his work.

“My friend.”

“Yanguli has no time, he’s going to the market!”

Khristo turned and saw me, surprised: “So, have you made up?”

“Yes, we have!” – I answered.

“Ah, now that’s another matter! You both are quite fine lads!”

Khristo rejoiced.

“Come this way!”

“Thanks, I’m in a hurry... When will you return?”

“In the evening,” – Yanguli replied.

“I’ll wait under the bridge!”

Having said that, I returned to my spot.

He came, silently tied his donkey to the side, took off his coat, and threw it over the pile of straw. That’s when my eyes fell on the magical word embroidered on his chest: ‘Hellados’.

Today, only the donkey witnessed our fight.

The fistfight lasted a long time. No matter how hard I tried, Yanguli was reckless – he delivered the first blow. I didn’t fall, I only staggered a little. When he attacked a second time, I skillfully leaned my body back, and his hand swept past my nose.

Students were asked to read the text carefully and answer two questions, supporting their opinions with evidence from the text. Such tasks undoubtedly develop students’ thinking skills. Why is critical thinking important? While many professional skills can be applied in personal and professional life, critical thinking skills are universally applicable across all fields. A person with strong critical thinking skills can:

- effectively solve problems;
- analyze information efficiently;
- exchange ideas and resolve issues through discussion;
- synthesize and organize information;
- process information objectively and inclusively;
- think logically.

Furthermore, working with texts provides opportunities to develop students’ critical thinking, independent reasoning, and communicative competence. The proposed exercises and tasks not only strengthen phonetic, lexical, and grammatical knowledge but also teach students to express their thoughts coherently and logically. The results of the study demonstrate the practical importance of implementing modern methodological approaches aimed at developing reading literacy and essay writing skills in Uzbek language education.

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