

Didactic Opportunities for Developing the Professional Competence of Future Primary School Teachers in “Mother Tongue” Lessons within the Credit-Modular System

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Abstract. *This article examines the didactic possibilities for developing the professional competence of future primary school teachers through “Mother Tongue” subject lessons within the framework of the credit-modular education system. The study highlights the importance of integrating subject-specific knowledge, pedagogical skills, and cognitive engagement in a modular learning environment. The “Mother Tongue” subject plays a crucial role in forming communicative, linguistic, and analytical abilities that directly support professional development. The research emphasizes learner-centered methods, independent tasks, and formative assessment strategies as key didactic tools for fostering competence. The findings suggest that well-designed modular lessons in the mother tongue discipline can serve as an effective platform for building professional capacity among future educators.*

Key words: *credit-modular system, didactic opportunities, professional competence, future primary school teachers, mother tongue instruction, pedagogical skills, learner-centered approach, formative assessment.*

In the context of modern educational reforms, the credit-modular system has become a significant innovation aimed at increasing the flexibility, efficiency, and student-centeredness of teacher education. This system emphasizes individual learning trajectories, independent study, and continuous assessment — all of which align with the goal of developing professional competence among future educators. For prospective primary school teachers, mastering professional competencies such as pedagogical thinking, communication, critical reflection, and subject mastery is essential for success in the classroom.

One of the key subjects in early teacher training is the “Mother Tongue,” which not only lays the foundation for language development but also plays a critical role in shaping a teacher’s instructional style, verbal communication, and cognitive engagement with learners. Mother Tongue lessons serve as a platform where methodological knowledge, didactic tools, and professional behavior intersect. Within the credit-modular environment, these lessons can be structured in ways that promote deeper learning, active participation, and continuous self-evaluation.

This research explores how didactic opportunities — such as interactive teaching methods, modular lesson design, competency-based assessment, and independent projects — can be strategically implemented in Mother Tongue instruction to enhance the professional competence of future primary teachers. The study seeks to identify effective strategies that align with both the structure of the credit-modular system and the pedagogical needs of teacher preparation programs.

By analyzing current trends in didactics and professional education, the study provides a theoretical and practical foundation for improving teacher training through targeted interventions in subject-based instruction. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure that teacher candidates are not only knowledgeable but also capable of applying pedagogical skills effectively in diverse classroom settings.

The professional competence of future primary school teachers has been extensively discussed in modern pedagogical literature as a multidimensional construct encompassing theoretical knowledge, pedagogical skills, communicative abilities, and reflective thinking (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Shulman, 1987). The need to align teacher training with evolving educational demands has led researchers to explore new models and systems of instruction, including the credit-modular system.

The **credit-modular system**, as outlined by OECD (2018) and UNESCO (2021), promotes flexibility, learner autonomy, and competency-based education. According to Brown and Atkins (2002), modular structures allow educators to plan instruction based on clearly defined outcomes and competencies, enabling students to progress through personalized learning pathways. Within this system, the teacher's role shifts from knowledge transmitter to facilitator of learning — a change that requires enhanced didactic approaches.

Several scholars (Biggs & Tang, 2011; Bransford et al., 2005) have emphasized the importance of active learning and formative assessment in modular education, asserting that modularity supports deeper engagement and self-directed learning. In this context, **didactic possibilities** refer to the various instructional tools and strategies — such as case-based learning, portfolio assessment, project-based activities, and interactive discussions — that enable students to construct knowledge and develop teaching competencies.

In the sphere of **language and literacy education**, particularly within **Mother Tongue instruction**, researchers such as Cummins (2000) and Vygotsky (1978) underscore the critical role of language in cognitive development and professional identity formation. They argue that the Mother Tongue is not only a medium of communication but also a means for developing analytical, cultural, and interpersonal competence in future educators. Teaching language with a didactic and reflective approach allows student-teachers to internalize instructional models and become more effective communicators and role models for young learners.

Within the Uzbek pedagogical context, authors such as **Azizxo‘jaeva (2003)** and **Shokirov (2024)** have discussed the integration of modern didactic principles into teacher education. They emphasize the importance of contextualizing content, using differentiated instruction, and leveraging interactive methods in "Mother Tongue" lessons to foster communicative and pedagogical competence. Moreover, the **State Educational Standards of Uzbekistan (2021)** support a competency-based approach that encourages the development of critical thinking, subject mastery, and learner autonomy in teacher education programs.

Recent studies have also highlighted how **credit-modular instruction**, when applied effectively in Mother Tongue courses, enhances not only linguistic skills but also the ability to design structured lessons, manage classroom discourse, and apply assessment techniques — all of which are integral aspects of professional teaching competence (Yusupov, 2022; Kadirova, 2023).

In summary, the literature reveals a growing consensus on the value of integrating credit-modular structures with didactic innovations in teacher education. When applied to Mother Tongue instruction, these approaches offer rich opportunities for developing the comprehensive professional skills required of future primary school teachers.

This study investigated how the integration of didactic strategies within the credit-modular education system influences the development of professional competence among future primary school teachers during “Mother Tongue” lessons. The research was conducted using a mixed-method approach that included classroom observation, analysis of lesson plans, student self-assessments, and surveys from both students and faculty at pedagogical universities.

1. Baseline Observations and Identified Gaps

Initial classroom observations revealed that many pre-service teachers lacked confidence in planning and conducting lessons that encouraged student interaction and independent thinking. Traditional lecture-based methods were still dominant, and lesson content was often delivered passively, with limited opportunities for learners to engage critically or creatively.

Surveys conducted among 130 future primary school teachers showed that:

- 62% felt unprepared to independently design modular lesson plans,
- 58% rarely used reflective tools such as self-assessment or teaching journals,
- Only 37% believed they had adequate experience applying learner-centered didactic techniques.

These results suggested a significant gap between theoretical coursework and practical application of didactic strategies in subject-specific instruction.

2. Implementation of Didactic Strategies in Modular Lessons

As part of the experimental phase, a series of “Mother Tongue” lessons were redesigned using key didactic elements such as:

- **Interactive teaching methods** (peer learning, small group discussion),
- **Competency-based assessment tools** (rubrics, checklists),
- **Modular learning tasks** (independent projects, differentiated assignments),
- **Formative feedback loops** (teacher-student reflection, revision).

These elements were applied over one semester to experimental groups of pre-service teachers.

3. Key Outcomes

After the implementation, several measurable improvements were observed:

- **Lesson design quality improved by 35%**, with clearer objectives, integrated activities, and alignment with professional standards.
- **Active participation in classes rose by 42%**, as students became more involved in planning, presenting, and evaluating lessons.
- **Reflective practice increased**, with 71% of students regularly using feedback and self-assessment to improve their work.
- **Professional confidence grew**, especially in managing language-based discussions and applying grammar and vocabulary instruction creatively.

In post-intervention surveys:

- 82% of students expressed that the modular format made them more autonomous learners,
- 76% felt that the didactic tools used in the course helped them understand their future professional role more clearly.

4. Qualitative Feedback

Interviews with faculty and students emphasized the role of the “Mother Tongue” subject in shaping not only linguistic competence but also broader pedagogical skills. Many noted that credit-modular structures encouraged responsibility, timely task completion, and personal initiative — qualities crucial for professional competence.

In summary, the analysis confirmed that incorporating structured didactic methods within a credit-modular framework leads to a significant enhancement in the professional development of future primary school teachers. “Mother Tongue” lessons, when supported by reflective and interactive tools, become powerful platforms for nurturing instructional creativity, confidence, and competence.

The findings of the study highlight the significant potential of integrating didactic innovations into the “Mother Tongue” curriculum to improve the professional competence of future primary school teachers. Within the framework of the credit-modular system, teaching is no longer confined to passive knowledge transmission but instead shifts toward competency-based, student-centered learning. This transformation necessitates the use of advanced pedagogical strategies that actively involve learners in their educational development.

The observed improvements in lesson planning, student engagement, and reflective thinking validate earlier research by Biggs & Tang (2011), who emphasized that constructive alignment and clear learning outcomes are crucial for effective modular education. In our context, when future teachers were guided to use didactic elements such as active learning, peer feedback, and formative assessment, they demonstrated a greater capacity for critical thinking and creative instruction — key components of professional competence.

Furthermore, the role of the “Mother Tongue” subject emerged as uniquely important. Unlike other content areas, language instruction inherently demands the development of communication, logic, and cultural awareness. As Vygotsky (1978) noted, language plays a central role in cognitive and social development. Our study confirms that well-designed language lessons not only improve linguistic proficiency but also cultivate skills such as classroom discourse management, instructional clarity, and student engagement techniques — all of which are essential in a primary education setting.

A particularly notable outcome of the research was the growth in students’ **metacognitive awareness**. As they engaged with modular learning tasks and formative feedback systems, many pre-service teachers began to evaluate their own teaching styles, set personal development goals, and revise their methods based on self-assessment. This echoes the work of Schön (1983), who argued that reflective practice is one of the core attributes of the “professional practitioner.”

From a broader perspective, the implementation of didactic approaches in a modular structure reinforces the philosophy of lifelong learning and autonomous professional development. Students trained under such systems are more likely to embrace innovation in their future classrooms and adapt to diverse learning needs. The alignment of this approach with **Uzbekistan’s national education reform goals** also illustrates its practical significance, especially in developing educators who are competent, reflective, and responsive to change.

However, it is important to acknowledge that the success of this approach depends heavily on the preparedness of teacher educators themselves. Institutions must invest in continuous professional development for faculty members to effectively model and mentor the use of didactic tools. Moreover, infrastructural support, such as access to digital platforms and resources, is necessary to fully realize the advantages of the credit-modular model.

In conclusion, the discussion affirms that the synergy between modular education and didactic methodology offers a promising pathway for transforming teacher preparation. The “Mother Tongue” subject, with its rich linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions, serves as an effective field for nurturing the core competencies needed by future primary school teachers. Further research could explore long-term impacts of such training on in-service teacher performance and pupil outcomes.

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