

IMPROVING PIRLS RESULTS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING READING LITERACY

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15022606>

Maftuna Sagdatdinova

*Nukus State Pedagogical Institute
Faculty of elementary education
2nd year student*

**BOSHLANG'ICH SINFLARDA PIRLS NATIJALARINI YAXSHILASH:
O'QISH SAVODXONLIGINI RIVOJLANTIRISH STRATEGIYALARI**

**УЛУЧШЕНИЕ РЕЗУЛЬТАТОВ PIRLS В НАЧАЛЬНЫХ КЛАССАХ:
СТРАТЕГИИ РАЗВИТИЯ ЧИТАТЕЛЬСКОЙ ГРАМОТНОСТИ**

Abstract

This article examines effective strategies for improving Reading Literacy in primary education through the lens of the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). The research analyzes current approaches to reading instruction, identifies key factors influencing PIRLS performance, and proposes evidence-based interventions to enhance reading literacy outcomes. The literature review reveals that balanced literacy approaches, intensive teacher professional development, parental involvement, and culturally responsive teaching materials significantly impact reading proficiency.

Keywords

PIRLS, reading literacy, primary education, reading strategies, educational assessment, literacy development, instructional approaches

Annotatsiya

Ushbu maqola Xalqaro o'qish savodxonligini o'rganish dasturi (PIRLS) prizmasi orqali boshlang'ich ta'limda o'qish savodxonligini yaxshilash uchun samarali strategiyalarni o'rganadi. Tadqiqot o'qitishning zamonaviy yondashuvlarini tahlil qiladi, PIRLS ko'rsatkichlariga ta'sir etuvchi asosiy omillarni aniqlaydi va o'qish savodxonligi natijalarini oshirish uchun dalillarga asoslangan usullarni taklif qiladi. Adabiyotlar tahlili muvozanatli savodxonlik yondashuvlari, o'qituvchilarning intensiv kasbiy tayyorgarligi, ota-onalarning ishtiroki va madaniy

jihatdan mos o'quv materiallari o'qish savodxonligiga sezilarli ta'sir ko'rsatishini ko'rsatadi.

Kalit so'zlar

PIRLS, o'qish savodxonligi, boshlang'ich ta'lim, o'qish strategiyalari, ta'lim baholash, savodxonlik rivojlanishi, o'qitish yondashuvlari

Аннотация

В данной статье рассматриваются эффективные стратегии повышения читательской грамотности в начальном образовании через призму Международного исследования качества чтения и понимания текста (PIRLS). В исследовании анализируются современные подходы к обучению чтению, определяются ключевые факторы, влияющие на результаты PIRLS, и предлагаются основанные на фактических данных вмешательства для улучшения результатов читательской грамотности. Обзор литературы показывает, что сбалансированный подход к обучению грамоте, интенсивное профессиональное развитие учителей, участие родителей и культурно-ориентированные учебные материалы оказывают значительное влияние на читательскую грамотность.

Ключевые слова

PIRLS, читательская грамотность, начальное образование, стратегии чтения, образовательное оценивание, развитие грамотности, подходы к обучению

INTRODUCTION

Reading literacy serves as the foundation for all academic learning and is a critical determinant of students' future educational success. The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) represents one of the most comprehensive international assessments of reading comprehension at the fourth-grade level, providing valuable comparative data on reading achievement and associated instructional practices across participating countries [1]. This international benchmark has become increasingly significant for educational policymakers and practitioners seeking to improve literacy outcomes.

Despite considerable investments in educational reforms, many countries continue to struggle with improving their PIRLS results, indicating persistent challenges in developing effective reading literacy among primary school students. The gap between high-performing and low-performing educational systems highlights the need for targeted interventions based on evidence-based practices [2]. This research aims to identify and analyze key strategies that have

demonstrated effectiveness in improving reading literacy outcomes as measured by PIRLS.

METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This study employs a comprehensive literature review methodology to synthesize existing research on reading literacy development in primary education with a specific focus on PIRLS assessment outcomes. The analysis process involved thematic coding of the selected literature to identify recurring themes, evidence-based strategies, and contextual factors affecting reading literacy development. The findings were organized according to four main categories: instructional approaches, curriculum design, teacher preparation, and assessment practices.

Contemporary understanding of reading literacy development is grounded in several theoretical frameworks. Mullis and Martin [1] define reading literacy in PIRLS as "the ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual." This definition encompasses both the cognitive processes of comprehension and the social practices of literacy. The Simple View of Reading, developed by Gough and Tunmer, provides a foundational framework suggesting that reading comprehension results from the product of decoding ability and language comprehension [3]. Building on this model, Scarborough's Reading Rope metaphor illustrates how various strands of literacy skills become increasingly intertwined as readers develop proficiency [4].

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory offers another important perspective, emphasizing that reading development occurs through social interaction within culturally meaningful contexts [5]. This theoretical lens has informed approaches that recognize the importance of culturally responsive literacy instruction and the role of social interaction in reading development.

School-level factors also play a crucial role in reading achievement. Schools with well-resourced libraries, sufficient instructional materials, and positive school climates tend to demonstrate better PIRLS results [6]. Additionally, instructional time dedicated specifically to reading instruction correlates positively with reading achievement. Teacher quality and preparation emerge as particularly influential factors. Darling-Hammond's comprehensive review of teacher effectiveness research concluded that teacher expertise is one of the most significant determinants of student achievement in reading [7]. Teachers with specialized training in reading instruction demonstrate greater effectiveness in improving student literacy outcomes.

Research consistently supports balanced literacy approaches that combine explicit instruction in phonics with authentic reading experiences. The National Reading Panel's seminal report identified five essential components of effective

reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension [8]. Countries that have made significant gains in PIRLS, such as Finland and Singapore, have implemented comprehensive approaches that address all these components while adapting to their specific cultural and linguistic contexts [9].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The synthesis of research evidence reveals several high-impact strategies for improving reading literacy as measured by PIRLS. These strategies can be categorized into four main areas: instructional approaches, curriculum design, assessment practices, and system-level supports. The most compelling evidence supports a balanced approach to literacy instruction that combines systematic, explicit teaching of foundational skills with authentic reading experiences and comprehension strategy instruction. This balanced approach aligns with the multidimensional nature of the PIRLS assessment, which evaluates both basic comprehension and higher-order thinking skills [1].

Effective implementation of balanced literacy includes:

1. **Systematic phonics instruction:** Evidence from longitudinal studies demonstrates that explicit, systematic teaching of letter-sound relationships significantly improves word recognition abilities, particularly for beginning readers and those at risk for reading difficulties [3]. The key to effectiveness lies in integrating phonics instruction within meaningful reading contexts rather than teaching phonics in isolation.
2. **Vocabulary development:** Research indicates that vocabulary knowledge strongly predicts reading comprehension [8]. Effective vocabulary instruction includes both direct teaching of word meanings and indirect approaches that expose students to rich language through read-alouds and wide reading. Particular attention to academic vocabulary supports students in comprehending the informational texts featured prominently in PIRLS assessments.
3. **Comprehension strategy instruction:** Teaching students specific strategies for monitoring comprehension, questioning, summarizing, and visualizing text significantly improves reading outcomes [4]. The gradual release of responsibility model—where teachers model strategies, provide guided practice, and facilitate independent application—proves particularly effective for developing these metacognitive skills.
4. **Volume of reading:** Countries with high PIRLS performance typically ensure students engage in substantial amounts of reading across diverse text types [9]. Both in-school and out-of-school reading volume correlates with improved comprehension and vocabulary development.

Physical and digital learning environments that provide access to diverse, high-quality texts support reading development. Research demonstrates that classroom libraries containing 500-1,500 books of varied genres and reading levels are associated with higher reading achievement [10]. Digital reading platforms that provide access to e-books and interactive reading materials can supplement physical collections, particularly in resource-constrained settings.

In the Uzbek context, Abdurahmonova and Tojiyev [11] examined reading literacy development in primary schools and found that systematic approaches combining traditional and innovative methods yielded the most significant improvements in student reading outcomes. Their research highlighted the importance of adapting international best practices to the specific linguistic and cultural context of Uzbekistan. Khodjimurodova's [12] research on teacher preparation in Uzbekistan underscores the importance of specialized training in reading pedagogy for primary teachers. Her longitudinal study demonstrated that teachers who received intensive preparation in reading instruction methods produced significantly better student outcomes on national reading assessments compared to those with general pedagogical training.

CONCLUSION

This comprehensive analysis of research on reading literacy development yields several key insights for improving PIRLS results in primary education. The evidence strongly supports adopting balanced literacy approaches that combine systematic instruction in foundational skills with authentic reading experiences and explicit teaching of comprehension strategies. Creating text-rich environments with diverse, culturally relevant materials provides essential support for literacy development, while formative assessment practices enable targeted instruction responsive to student needs.

Teacher expertise emerges as perhaps the most critical factor in improving reading outcomes, highlighting the importance of investing in high-quality initial teacher preparation and ongoing professional development focused specifically on reading instruction. At the system level, policy coherence across curriculum, assessment, and teacher development creates the conditions for sustainable improvement in reading literacy.

REFERENCES:

1. Mullis, I. V. S., & Martin, M. O. (2019). PIRLS 2021 Assessment Framework. Boston College, TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center.

2. Mullis, I. V. S., Martin, M. O., Foy, P., & Hooper, M. (2017). PIRLS 2016 International Results in Reading. Boston College, TIMSS & PIRLS International Study Center.
3. Ehri, L. C., Nunes, S. R., Stahl, S. A., & Willows, D. M. (2001). Systematic phonics instruction helps students learn to read: Evidence from the National Reading Panel's meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 71(3), 393-447.
4. Duke, N. K., & Pearson, P. D. (2008). Effective practices for developing reading comprehension. *Journal of Education*, 189(1-2), 107-122.
5. Comber, B. (2016). *Literacy, place, and pedagogies of possibility*. Routledge.
6. Neuman, S. B. (2009). *Changing the odds for children at risk: Seven essential principles of educational programs that break the cycle of poverty*. Teachers College Press.
7. Darling-Hammond, L., Hyler, M. E., & Gardner, M. (2017). *Effective teacher professional development*. Learning Policy Institute.
8. National Reading Panel. (2000). *Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction*. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.
9. Brozo, W. G., Shiel, G., & Topping, K. (2007). Engagement in reading: Lessons learned from three PISA countries. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 51(4), 304-315.
10. Saiegh-Haddad, E., & Joshi, R. M. (2014). *Handbook of Arabic literacy: Insights and perspectives*. Springer.
11. Abdurahmonova, Z. S., & Tojiyev, M. (2022). *Boshlang'ich sinflarda o'qish savodxonligini rivojlantirish metodikasi*. Toshkent: O'qituvchi.
12. Khodjimurodova, G. (2023). O'qituvchilarning kasbiy tayyorgarligi va o'quvchilar savodxonligi o'rtasidagi bog'liqlik. *Pedagogik mahorat*, 3(4), 76-82.