

УДК 378.011.3-051:784

© Kostikova I., Liu G., 2024

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5894-4846>

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3160-9057>

<https://doi.org/10.34142/23128046.2024.57.08>

**I. I. Kostikova,
Gengchen Liu**

STATE LANGUAGE COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT FOR YOUNG LEARNERS AT PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN CHINA

The main goal of studying the state language in primary school in China is to develop the knowledge of the native Chinese language, including all types of speech and language activities, skills, competences through various styles and genres of language and speech. The aim of this article is to analyse the state language competence development for young learners in the PRC in the context of primary education. The tasks are to characterize the basic principles of primary education in China; describe some requirements for first-grade learners at 6 years old regarding the state language competence and define the recommendations accordingly for its development. The methods of qualitative analysis are used in the paper as comparative analysis, content analysis, and systematization to provide a comprehensive understanding and evaluation of the observed materials. The results: the Chinese primary education system promotes comprehensive development for young learners by integrating linguistic, cognitive, and social skills, fostering language growth through regular learning, practical tasks, and a supportive, creative environment. Six main requirements for young learners at 6 years old in first-grade concerning the state language competence are described and the recommendations consequently for its development are defined for each of the requirements. The special attention is given to developing Chinese literary language as a state language, mastering reading and writing skills, made-to-order to learners' needs and development steps through practical exercises, discussions, storytelling. It fosters state language competence development, learners' personal growth, blending traditional literacy methods with modern communication techniques. The discussive point is that the Chinese educational primary system is not concentrated a lot at competence development, but more on knowledge development. In conclusion, it is declared that the primary education system in China prioritizes state language development, blending traditional literacy methods in China with modern techniques to support comprehensive development, reading and writing skills, communication in the state Chinese language.

Keywords: *the Chinese language, the PRC, first-grade learner, primary education, requirements, recommendations, teacher.*

Костікова І. І., Лю Генчень. Формування компетентності спілкування державною мовою молодших школярів у початкових школах Китаю. Головною метою вивчення державної мови в початковій школі Китаю є оволодіння знаннями про рідну китайську мову, включаючи всі види мовної і мовленнєвої діяльності, умінь, компетенцій через різні стилі та жанри мови і мовлення. Метою цієї статті є аналіз формування компетентності спілкування державною мовою молодших школярів КНР у контексті початкової освіти. Завдання: визначити основні принципи початкової освіти в Китаї; схарактеризувати деякі вимоги до першокласників, учнів 6 років, щодо компетентності опанування державною мовою та відповідно визначити рекомендації щодо її формування. Методи якісного аналізу використовувалися у роботі, як-то: порівняльний аналіз, контент-аналіз та систематизація для забезпечення всебічного розуміння та оцінки досліджуваних матеріалів. Результат дослідження: китайська система початкової освіти сприяє всебічному розвитку учнів шляхом інтеграції лінгвістичних, когнітивних і соціальних навичок, підтримки розвитку мови через постійне навчання, практичні завдання та сприятливе творче середовище. Схарактеризовано шість основних вимог до молодших школярів 6 років у першому класі щодо компетентності опанування державної мови та визначено рекомендації щодо її формування для кожної з вимог. Особлива увага приділяється розвитку державної китайської літературної мови, опануванню навичок читання та письма, адаптованих до потреб учнів, та етапам розвитку цих навичок шляхом практичних вправ, бесід, розповідей. Це сприяє формуванню компетентності спілкування державною мовою, особистісному зростанню учнів, поєднанню традиційних методів грамотності з сучасними прийомами спілкування. Дискусійним моментом є те, що китайська система початкової освіти недостатньо зосереджена на формуванні компетентності, більше – на формуванні знань. Наприкінці дослідження зроблено висновок, що система початкової освіти в Китаї надає пріоритет розвитку державної мови, поєднуючи традиційні методи грамотності в Китаї з сучасними підходами для підтримки всебічного розвитку, навичок читання і письма, спілкування державною китайською мовою.

Ключові слова: китайська мова, КНР, учень першого класу, початкова освіта, вимоги, рекомендації, вчитель.

Introduction. The priority goals of supporting the state Chinese language are defined in various documents in China (A review, 2022; China issues, 2023; Ministry, n.d.) in the current programs for secondary schools. According to the Statistical report (Statistical report, 2023) in China in 2022 there were 149,100 primary schools across China with 107 million registered learners. In 2022, 17,013,900 learners were admitted too. The number of teachers and staff in primary schools was 6,629,400. The percentage of full-time primary school teachers who met

the qualification requirements reached 99.99 %, and 98.90 % of them had at least a three-year bachelor's degree.

In China, learners traditionally put a lot of effort into learning. Confucius regarded education as a lifelong search of self-improvement. Great attention is paid to teaching the state Chinese language. The main goal of studying the state language in primary school in China is to develop language competence by mastering the knowledge of the native language, including all types of speech and language activities, skills, competences through various styles and genres of language and speech (Kostikova & Liu, 2023).

The research of language teaching and learning, oral speech, as well as mastering hieroglyphic writing for written speech at the initial stage of learning, have been outlined in several Chinese papers. The issue of Chinese language teaching methodology is revealed by Chinese researchers, but basically about teaching Chinese as a foreign language (Chen, 2010; Cui, 2010; Teaching Chinese, 2008; Wang & Sun, 2011; Xu & Wu, 2006). However, the topic of mastering language competence through the school demands and recommendations has not been analysed totally.

Aim and tasks. The aim of this article is to analyse the state language competence development for young learners in the PRC in the context of primary education. The tasks are to characterize the basic principles of primary education in China; describe some requirements for first-grade learners at 6 years old regarding the state language competence and define the recommendations accordingly for its development.

Research methods. The methods of qualitative analysis are used as comparative analysis, content analysis, and systematization to provide a comprehensive understanding and evaluation of the observed materials.

Research results. Let's characterize the basic principles of primary education in China. In primary school, great attention is paid to the integrity of learning and young learners' development. The attention is paid to the integration of the learning goals and different subjects, as well as to promote the comprehensive and coordinated development of the body and mind of learners, rather than a unilateral desire to develop one or several aspects.

The great attention is also paid to individual differences in young learners' development as it is a continuous and gradual process, which also shows certain characteristics. Each young learner develops along the learning process, and the speed of young learners' development is different, everyone reaches a certain level of knowledge in different ways. It is necessary to understand and respect individual differences, support and guide them from the initial level to a higher level, in order to

achieve the set goal with the optimal speed and way. At the initial stage of learning, "sameness" should not be used to measure all young learners.

At primary schools, the attention is paid to the learning style. Learning of young learners in the PRC is based on direct life experience and games as the basis of learning in the classroom and in daily life. It is necessary to cherish the unique combination of games and life, create a rich educational environment, organize learning rationally, support the needs of learners as much as possible, so that they can gain experience through direct perception, practice and personal experience.

The great attention in primary school is paid to young learners' positive attitude to learning and good behavior. The individual tendency of young learners in the process of educational activity is a valuable quality necessary for lifelong learning and development. It is necessary to respect and protect the curiosity and interest of young learners, to help them develop gradually the quality of learning, personal qualities such as initiative, concentration, overcoming fear of difficulties, perseverance in learning, the desire to create something new. Neglecting these qualities in the education of young learners leads to simple imitation of knowledge, skills and abilities, does not develop personality.

The language competence development begins in the first grade. From the first grade, young learners are explained that language is a tool for communication and thinking. The first grade is an important period of language development, especially the development of oral and written speech in China. The language competence development goes through various stages, areas of speech and language development, and also has an important impact on the development of other areas: young learners use language for communication, and also develop interpersonal communication skills, understand others through communicative situations, and offer their own ideas.

Young learners' language skills in mastering their native language are formed in the process of communication and language use. It is necessary to create a free and pleasant environment for young learners to communicate, encourage and support communication, so that young learners learn to speak confidently, like to speak, and receive positive feedback.

In the first grade, the process of teaching young learners to read in their native language begins. This is a complex process, it can be accompanied by reading books aloud to young learners, it is recommended to read books to young learners to enrich their speech, develop interest in reading and develop good reading skills, further expanding the reading experience.

Young learners' mastery of their native language in China requires appropriate support. Learners' life experience should be expanded through various extracurricular activities to enrich the content of the language and improve its mastering, and express

their own thoughts. Learners should learn to be guided in different life situations to express their own attitudes.

Let's describe some requirements from the "Regulations" (Regulations, 2016) for first-grade young learners, at 6 years old, regarding the state language competence and accordingly define the recommendations for their achievement.

1) The requirements for attentive listening and understanding of the state language. Young learners should pay attention to a teacher who is speaking; they should learn to take the initiative to ask questions when they do not understand something; they should understand some relatively complex sentences that represent a cause-and-effect relationship, assumptions in combination with context, etc.

The recommendations for teachers: give learners more opportunities to listen and talk, talk with them about topics that interest them, read books together and tell stories; guide learners so that they learn to listen attentively. A teacher should listen learners patiently and wait for others to finish talking and speaking. Teach learners to express their own views. When speaking with learners, pay attention to the use of the tone and intonation of the conversation in the state language, namely, disagreement in a firmer tone, storytelling in happy or sad tones of the characters, etc.

2) The requirements for willingness to speak and express learners' clearly. Young learners should learn to discuss problems with others and dare to speak in front of the class. They should speak the state language (the so-called "Mandarin"), their pronunciation should be correct and clear, regardless of which region of China they live in. In ethnic minority areas, learners may speak dialects at home, but at school the official state language is Chinese. Young learners' speech should be consistent and clear, full of common adjectives, synonyms, etc.

The recommendations for teachers: create opportunities for young learners to communicate, inspire the love to language interaction. Respect and accept the way learners speak, regardless of their level of expression, listen and respond positively. Encourage and support learners to talk about interesting things, books, cartoons, etc. Promote the minimal use of dialects in ethnic minority areas, create an environment actively for using the state language. For the clarity of their speech, the teacher's own speech should be clear and concise. If learners are shy, tell him not to worry, speak slowly. At the same time, teachers should be patient themselves to help learners to express thoughts clearly.

3) The requirements for speaking skills. Young learners should learn to respond when others speak actively. They should mind the tone of speech, stress, intonation correctly. They should learn to speak in turn, not interrupt others, they should use situational speech according to the different life situations they are in.

The recommendations for teachers: pay attention to the correctness of your own speech, be an example for young learners. Listen carefully and use polite words

when communicating, do not speak in public very loudly, do not use offensive, swear words. When a learner expresses his/her opinion, a teacher can go down to the learner's level, sit down, listen to him/her patiently. Teachers should help learners develop good speech behavior skills: in combination with the situation, remind them the necessary communication etiquette when they talk to elders, be polite, have a neat appearance, greet guests in class when they attend class, thank when receiving help. Remind learners to follow the speech rules in a group, such as speaking in turn, not interrupting, and not speaking loudly in public places.

4) The requirements for reading and writing skills. Learners should focus on reading books, talking about books and stories, learning to write, understanding the plots in a story and life situations, knowing that words have a certain meaning.

The recommendations for teachers: provide a calm environment and conditions for teaching learners to read. Books and textbooks should have pictures that are age-appropriate and of interest to young learners. Provide a quiet place and conditions in the classroom for reading and ensure that young learners can read texts independently. Stimulate their interest in reading and developing reading skills. Spend time reading books and telling stories to them. Provide them with children's literature of various genres, such as children's poems, interesting stories.

When young learners encounter an interesting matter or problem, refer them to read about it in a story or a book. Let learners feel the role of the book and enjoy information through reading. Teach them to understand the use of hieroglyphs, text symbols, etc. Teach them to know the basic symbols of hospitals, public places, emergency phone numbers. Combine the reality of life with learning to help learners understand the use of words in life situations. For example, if a learner is having a new toy, read the instructions together to understand how to play with a toy.

5) The requirements for reading comprehension. Young learners should understand the content of the children's literature they read. Teach them to fantasize, guess the development of the plot based on the pictures in a text, book, in order to suggest their own ending to a story or create their own story. Teach them to express their opinion about the stories they read in the state literary language.

The recommendations for teachers: teach young learners to read, guide them so that they understand the content of a story or book based on their own experience. Teach learners to follow the pictures and images carefully, combine the images and the plot of a story, and then discuss what they have read, talk about the connection between main characters and a plot, discuss a plot line, retell the story according to its structure, and talk about the general idea of a story.

Encourage learners to read independently and discuss their stories and reading experiences with others. Develop their imagination and creativity in reading. Encourage them to tell stories based on picture prompts, boldly propose their own

storyline. Develop, adapt part of a story or update the ending of a story. Encourage learners to express their thoughts about books, retell stories in various ways, such as painting, dramatization, etc.

Inspire and support learners' own stories and teach them to create pictures for their own stories, that they can draw their own book. Teach them to feel the attractiveness of literary works. Guide young learners to evaluate or imitate (repeat) consciously the language rhythm and rhythm of literary works if reading aloud. When a teacher reads to young learners, convey a story through the expressions, movements or sounds of the frustration of various characters. Emotional states allow learners to understand the appeal and expressiveness of stories and books.

6) The requirements for writing skills. Young learners should understand the function of text symbols in the process of writing, writing simple words, sentences, texts, and developing interest in writing. Teach them to prepare paper, pencil, pen and other writing materials so that they can be taken at any time, and use natural materials (sand, branches, etc.) to meet their needs in drawing stories. Encourage them to draw things or stories that interest them and tell others, they can express their thoughts and emotions by writing and drawing stories.

Write down the things that learners said in words and read them so that they know and understand that the words you say can be written down to understand the use of a story or text. Prepare young learners for writing, drawing, use games that promote hand-eye coordination by connecting the outlines of graphics drawn with a dotted line. Help learners learn the skills of using a pen from top to bottom, from left to right. Encourage learners to write their own names. Remind them to maintain the correct posture when writing.

Discussion. Today, the world's political, economic and cultural development is undergoing profound changes, globalization has become an irreversible and inevitable trend, leading to frequent exchanges and close contacts between people in a cross-cultural context. The scope of language use is becoming more and more widely used, the means and methods are becoming more perfect, academic exchanges, trade negotiations, teaching, education, cultural exchanges and other aspects are inseparable from the participation and assistance of language, regardless of whether learners are subjectively ready, understand and accept it, language is in the unstoppable trend of the times and affects each of us.

Language globalization puts forward higher requirements for state language education, and it is necessary to be aware not only of the mother tongue protection (Liu, 2023), but also respond actively to language education strategies. It is necessary to look at state language competence broadly. The discussive point is that the Chinese educational primary system is not concentrated a lot at competence development, but more on skill development.

Conclusion. The state language competence development for young learners in the PRC is an important part of primary education. The Chinese education system focuses on the integration of linguistic, cognitive and social aspects aimed at the comprehensive development of young learners. Language and speech skills are developed through gradual learning, learners' everyday experience and practical tasks at lessons. Teachers should create a favorable environment for young learners to develop speaking, reading and writing, emphasizing gradualness, an individual approach and encouragement of creativity.

The special attention is paid to mastering the Chinese literary language, reading and writing skills development, taking into account the diversity of needs and the speed of learner's development. Teachers should provide support to young learners by involving them in discussion, reading, writing, creating their own stories and practical exercises. It contributes to a deeper understanding of the state language as a tool for communication, thinking, reading, writing.

Mastering the Chinese state language is also the basis for further learning, intercultural exchange and personal growth for young learners. Thus, the primary education system in China demonstrates a desire for a harmonious combination of the traditional approach to reading and writing and modern communication techniques for language competence development for the state Chinese language.

ЛІТЕРАТУРА:

- A review of achievements in the development of the Chinese language in 2012-2021. (2022), http://en.moe.gov.cn/documents/reports/202210/t20221022_671530.html.
- Chen L. (2010). Teaching Method of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language. Zhonghua Book Company, 324 (陈林(2010). 对外汉语教育法. 中华书局, 324)
- China issues action plan to improve basic education. (2023). Xinhua August 31, 2023, http://en.moe.gov.cn/documents/laws_policies/202309/t20230901_1077836.html.
- Cui X. (2010). A collection of lesson plans for students in the final course of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language. Beijing Language and Culture University Publishing Club. (崔希亮 (2010) 对外汉语结果课会生教案集. 北京语许大学 236.)
- Kostikova I., Liu G. (2023). Teaching Chinese as a state language using nursery rhymes in primary classes. *Theory and methods of teaching and education*. 55:77-86, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34142/23128046.2023.55.07>
- Liu G. (2023). Teaching the state language in China by rhythmic and song means. *Innovative pedagogy*. 56(1): 79-82. DOI <https://doi.org/10.32782/2663-6085/2023/56.1.16>
- Ministry of education the PRC (n.d.) <http://en.moe.gov.cn/>
- Regulations of the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. Work procedures. Order No. 39 of January 5, 2016 (2016). (中華人民共和國教育部條例. 工作程序. 106年1月5日第39號命令(2016).
- Statistical report on China's educational achievements in 2022. (2023). http://en.moe.gov.cn/documents/reports/202304/t20230403_1054100.html
- Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language. (2008). Zhonghua Book Company, 293. (对外汉语教育法. (2008) 中华书局, 页数: 293)

- Wang W., Sun Q. (2011). International Chinese language visual image industry education hand. Higher Education Published Society; 262 (王巍, 孙淇(2011). 国际汉语汉视题图像工业教育手前. – 高等教育 Published 社; 262).
- Xu Z., Wu R. (2006). Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language. Peking University Second Press, 238 (徐子亮, 吴仁甫 (2006) 外外汉语教京法. 北京大学第二社, 238)

REFERENCES:

- A review of achievements in the development of the Chinese language in 2012-2021. (2022), http://en.moe.gov.cn/documents/reports/202210/t20221022_671530.html.
- Chen, L. (2010). Teaching Method of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language. Zhonghua Book Company, 324 (陈林(2010). 对外汉语教育法. 中华书局, 324) [in Chinese].
- China issues action plan to improve basic education. (2023). Xinhua August 31, 2023, http://en.moe.gov.cn/documents/laws_policies/202309/t20230901_1077836.html.
- Cui, X. (2010). A collection of lesson plans for students in the final course of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language. Beijing Language and Culture University Publishing Club. (崔希亮 (2010) 对外汉语结果课会生教案集. 北京语许大学 236.) [in Chinese].
- Kostikova, I. & Liu, G. (2023). Teaching Chinese as a state language using nursery rhymes in primary classes. *Theory and methods of teaching and education*. 55:77-86, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34142/23128046.2023.55.07>
- Liu, G. (2023). Teaching the state language in China by rhythmic and song means. *Innovative pedagogy*. 56(1): 79-82. DOI <https://doi.org/10.32782/2663-6085/2023/56.1.16>
- Ministry of education the PRC (n.d.) <http://en.moe.gov.cn/>
- Regulations of the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. Work procedures. Order No. 39 of January 5, 2016 (2016). (中華人民共和國教育部條例. 工作程序. 106年1月5日第39號命令(2016). [in Chinese].
- Statistical report on China's educational achievements in 2022. (2023). http://en.moe.gov.cn/documents/reports/202304/t20230403_1054100.html
- Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language. (2008). Zhonghua Book Company, 293. (对外汉语教育法业. (2008) 中华书局, 页数: 293) [in Chinese].
- Wang, W. & Sun, Q. (2011). International Chinese language visual image industry education hand. Higher Education Published Society; 262 (王巍, 孙淇(2011). 国际汉语汉视题图像工业教育手前. – 高等教育 Published 社; 262). [in Chinese].
- Xu, Z. & Wu, R. (2006). Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language. Peking University Second Press, 238 (徐子亮, 吴仁甫 (2006) 外外汉语教京法. 北京大学第二社, 238) [in Chinese].

Інформація про авторів:

Костікова Ілона Іванівна: ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5894-4846>; доктор педагогічних наук, професор, завідувач кафедри теорії і практики англійської мови, Харківський національний педагогічний університет імені Г. С. Сковороди, вул. Валентинівська, 2, Харків, Україна, 61000, Україна
e-mail: ilonakostikova@gmail.com

Information about the authors:

Kostikova Ilona Ivanivna: ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5894-4846>; DSc in Education, Ph. D in Education, Full Professor, Head of the Department, Department of Theory and Practice of the English Language, H. S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University, Kharkiv, Ukraine, Valentynivska street, 2, Kharkiv, Ukraine, 61000
e-mail: ilonakostikova@gmail.com

Лю Генчень: ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3160-9057>; аспірант кафедри освітології та інноваційної педагогіки, Харківський національний педагогічний

Liu Gengchen: ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3160-9057>; Ph.D. Student, Department of Education and Innovative Pedagogy, H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University, Kharkiv,

університет імені Г. С. Сковороди, вул. Ukraine, Valentynivska street, 2, Kharkiv, Ukraine,
Валентинівська, 2, Харків, Україна, 61000, 61000
Україна
e-mail: 1421634594@qq.com e-mail: 1421634594@qq.com

Цитуйте цю статтю як: Костікова І. І., Лю Генчень. Формування компетентності спілкування державною мовою молодших школярів у початкових школах Китаю. *Теорія та методика навчання та виховання*. 2024. № 57. С. 98-107.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34142/23128046.2024.57.08>

Дата надходження статті до редакції: 20.09.2024
Стаття прийнята до друку: 01.10.2024