



## Enhancing Preschoolers' Cognitive Abilities In English Lessons

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### Abstract

This paper explores how English lessons can help preschool children develop their thinking and learning abilities. In many preschools, English teaching focuses only on words and pronunciation. However, if teachers also include activities that build reasoning, memory, problem-solving, and creativity, English lessons become more useful and interesting for children. Based on the ideas of Vygotsky and Piaget, the paper explains that children learn best when they explore, talk, and reflect together. It also offers practical suggestions for teachers in Uzbekistan to make English lessons fit the goals of the national preschool education system and support the overall development of young learners.

**Keywords:** - Cognitive development, English language teaching, preschool education, project-based learning, Uzbekistan.

### Introduction

In recent years, teaching English to young children has become an important part of education in Uzbekistan. This change is connected to national reforms that aim to improve children's ability to communicate and think effectively [1]. Preschool education is the first and most important stage of learning because children's memory, imagination, attention, and reasoning begin to develop during these early years.

However, in many preschools, English lessons still focus mainly on memorizing simple words such as colors, animals, and numbers. This kind of learning does not help children use higher-level thinking skills. When English lessons include activities that develop observation, comparison, and problem-solving, children not only learn the language better but also improve their overall thinking abilities.

### Main part

The theoretical basis of this study is built on the ideas of Vygotsky, Piaget, and Chard, who all highlight that young children learn best through active participation and social interaction. According to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, children develop their thinking mainly through communication with others. He believed that language is not only a way to talk but also a tool for thinking [2]. When preschoolers use English, they learn new words and at the same time develop new ways of understanding the world. Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) shows that with teacher support and cooperation with peers, children can achieve more than they could alone. Similarly, Piaget viewed children as active learners who build knowledge through hands-on experiences. In the preoperational stage (ages 2–6), imagination and symbolic play are especially important [3]. Therefore, play-based English

lessons are effective at this age because they help children explore ideas, use symbols, and think creatively through songs, stories, and pretend play.

Building on these theories, project-based and play-based learning offer an effective way to connect language and cognitive development. These methods encourage children to explore, ask questions, and reflect on their experiences. For example, in small projects such as “My Family Album” or “Our Little Garden,” children use English to describe, compare, and create, which improves their reasoning and creativity. As Chard notes, project work helps children connect new knowledge with what they already know, keeping them curious and engaged. [4] Integrating cognitive development goals into English lessons requires purposeful task design. Each activity should engage not just language learning, but also thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving. [5]

Cognitive skill	Example activity	What children learn
Attention/Memory	“What’s Missing?” – showing and hiding picture cards	Children focus and remember better
Reasoning	Sorting games: “Which one is different?”	Children learn to think and compare
Creativity	Making up stories or drawing pictures	Children use imagination and express ideas
Critical Thinking	Guessing riddles	Children learn to think and find answers
Social Skills	Singing and group projects	Children learn teamwork and communication

Language and thinking develop together: as children learn to name and describe things, their thoughts become clearer and more organized.

To make English lessons effective for preschoolers in Uzbekistan, teachers should adapt methods to local needs and culture. Firstly, English should be used naturally in daily routines. Teachers can greet children, give instructions, and name objects in English during everyday activities. Simple phrases like “Let’s sit down” or “Good morning!” help children connect words with real actions and improve understanding and memory. Secondly, short project-based tasks keep children engaged and curious. Instead of isolated lessons, week-long projects like “My Garden” can combine songs, stories, drawing, and role play. These activities develop observation, reasoning, and problem-solving skills while helping children learn vocabulary meaningfully. Moreover, teachers should use bilingual scaffolding—starting with Uzbek for clarity, then gradually increasing English use. This prevents rote memorization and supports real comprehension. Storytelling and dialogue also help children organize their thoughts and make meaning from experiences [6].

Teacher training is also vital. Educators need to learn how to design games, use storytelling for cognitive growth, and assess curiosity and creativity. Well-trained teachers can combine language and thinking goals effectively. Parents should be involved too. Teachers can send home simple English songs, games, or picture cards to practice together, making learning continuous and enjoyable. Cultural relevance matters. Integrating Uzbek folklore, local nature, and traditional games makes English lessons more meaningful. For example, children can learn fruit names through a pretend market activity.

Finally, assessment should focus on observation, not tests. Teachers can track progress in attention, curiosity, and reasoning during play and communication. Concisely, by combining everyday English use, small projects, bilingual support, teacher training, parent cooperation, and cultural themes, preschools can build environments that strengthen both language and cognitive development.

### Conclusion

Preschool English lessons should not only teach language but also support children's overall thinking and personal growth. When children explore, ask questions, and create in English, they develop early critical and creative thinking skills. In Uzbekistan, using project-based, play-centered, and culturally relevant English lessons fits well with national preschool goals. This approach helps children build both basic English skills and important cognitive abilities such as attention, memory, reasoning, and problem-solving—skills that prepare them for lifelong learning.

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