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**CONFERENCE ARTICLE**

**PEDAGOGICAL CONDITIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING A DIFFERENTIATED APPROACH IN MOTHER TONGUE LESSONS (RESOURCES, TIME, ASSESSMENT, CLASS COMPOSITION)**

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**ABSTRACT**

Differentiated instruction in mother tongue lessons is often discussed as a set of techniques, yet its success depends primarily on pedagogical conditions that determine whether differentiation becomes systematic, equitable, and sustainable. This thesis analyzes four interrelated conditions—resources, time, assessment, and class composition—and explains how they shape teachers' capacity to diagnose learners' needs, design aligned task variants, and support progress toward common curricular outcomes. The results show that differentiation becomes feasible when teachers rely on a stable core lesson structure, reusable scaffolding resources, and criterion-referenced assessment routines that generate actionable feedback. In heterogeneous classes, effective differentiation is strengthened by flexible grouping based on objective-specific evidence rather than fixed ability labels, while time is protected by predictable learning cycles and well-defined transitions. The discussion argues that these conditions work as a system: deficits in one domain (for example, limited time for feedback) undermine the impact of others (such as well-designed tasks), whereas coherent alignment across domains enables inclusive and rigorous mother tongue teaching.

**KEYWORDS**

Differentiated instruction; mother tongue teaching; pedagogical conditions; formative assessment; classroom management; resources; time allocation; class composition.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Mother tongue lessons in primary school are foundational for reading comprehension, vocabulary growth, grammatical awareness, and coherent oral and written expression. At the same time, classrooms are inherently diverse: pupils differ in language exposure at home, literacy readiness, attention control, learning pace, and motivation. This heterogeneity makes uniform instruction pedagogically risky. When tasks are designed for an “average” learner, pupils who need additional scaffolding may experience repeated failure, while advanced pupils may encounter insufficient challenge and lose engagement. Differentiated instruction responds to this problem by varying learning pathways while keeping common goals intact. However, differentiation frequently remains episodic because teachers face structural constraints that limit planning, orchestration, and feedback. In practice, effective differentiation depends less on isolated methods than on pedagogical conditions that support continuity and equity.

This thesis focuses on four conditions that most strongly shape differentiated teaching in mother tongue lessons: the availability and organization of instructional resources, the management of time within lessons and across units, the assessment system used to capture growth and guide decisions, and the composition of the class, including the diversity of readiness levels and social dynamics. The purpose is to clarify how these conditions interact and how they can be structured to make differentiation realistic for teachers and meaningful for pupils.

The study uses a design-oriented synthesis of pedagogical literature on differentiated instruction, formative assessment, scaffolding, and classroom organization in primary education. The analysis treats differentiation as a system of decisions that

links diagnosis, task design, support, and evaluation. “Resources” are conceptualized as material, digital, and methodological tools that provide scaffolding and enable independent practice, such as leveled texts, vocabulary supports, writing frames, and reusable task templates. “Time” is analyzed as both lesson time and instructional time across a sequence of lessons, emphasizing how predictability and routines reduce transition losses and increase time on meaningful language activity. “Assessment” is operationalized as criterion-referenced evidence collection that informs feedback, revision, and progression decisions, rather than as occasional summative grading. “Class composition” is defined not only by academic diversity but also by language backgrounds, peer relations, and the distribution of participation opportunities during speaking, reading, and writing activities. The synthesis yields a conceptual model that can guide implementation planning and provide evaluation indicators for future empirical studies.

The results indicate that resource conditions influence differentiation primarily through the availability of scaffolds that allow pupils to work on the same competency target with different degrees of support. In mother tongue lessons, these scaffolds function most effectively when they are embedded in materials rather than added during instruction as improvised teacher assistance. When teachers have access to leveled texts connected by a shared theme, structured prompts for inference and retelling, vocabulary glossaries, and editing checklists, they can vary task pathways without changing lesson objectives. Resource sufficiency is not only a matter of quantity; organization is decisive. A coherent “resource bank” aligned to key competencies reduces preparation costs and supports continuity across lessons.

Time conditions shape differentiation through lesson rhythm and the teacher's capacity to provide feedback. Differentiation requires transitions between whole-class instruction, small-group support, and independent or collaborative work. When transitions are unclear, time is lost and behavior management demands increase, reducing instructional quality. The synthesis shows that time becomes manageable when teachers use predictable learning cycles: preparation and noticing can occur through short routines, differentiated practice can be organized through stable station-like structures, and consolidation can be achieved through short exit performances aligned to criteria. This rhythm protects time for reading discussion, guided writing, and error analysis, which are crucial for language development.

Assessment conditions are central because they determine whether differentiated pathways remain aligned with common outcomes. When assessment is primarily norm-referenced or focused on counting mistakes, differentiation risks becoming arbitrary or inequitable. The results support criterion-referenced assessment with transparent success criteria, frequent low-stakes checks, and feedback that leads to revision. In mother tongue lessons, this means evaluating reading comprehension through evidence-based explanations, assessing writing through coherence and language choices, and using spelling diagnostics to identify patterns rather than isolated slips. Such assessment practices make it possible to decide which scaffolds can be faded, which pupils need targeted mini-lessons, and which tasks should be extended for deeper reasoning.

Class composition affects differentiation through both academic diversity and interactional dynamics. In heterogeneous classes, fixed grouping can reproduce status hierarchies and reduce participation among pupils who perceive themselves as "low." The synthesis indicates that flexible grouping based on objective-specific evidence mitigates this risk, allowing pupils to receive support in one domain while contributing strength in another. Moreover, participation structures in discussion and peer response strongly influence outcomes in mother tongue lessons. When teachers explicitly manage turn-taking, role distribution, and norms of respectful feedback, differentiation becomes socially sustainable and supports inclusion.

The findings suggest that the four conditions operate as an interdependent system rather than as separate variables. Rich resources without time for meaningful use lead to superficial completion; carefully planned time routines without appropriate scaffolds can produce efficient but low-quality practice; strong assessment criteria without adequate resources can overwhelm teachers and pupils; and any instructional design can fail if class composition factors such as participation inequality and peer labeling are not addressed. This systemic view helps explain why differentiation often fails when schools focus only on teacher enthusiasm or isolated training sessions.

From a didactic perspective, the most productive strategy is to stabilize the "core" of instruction and vary supports around it. A shared lesson objective and a shared performance expectation create unity, while differentiated scaffolds create accessibility. This approach also protects academic rigor: struggling pupils are not confined to simplified content but are enabled to engage with meaningful tasks through supports that gradually fade. Time feasibility is improved when teachers reuse structures and resources, building routines that pupils internalize. Assessment becomes the engine of differentiation when it produces actionable information and supports learner agency through revision. Finally, attention to class composition reinforces equity, ensuring that differentiation does not become a hidden tracking mechanism but remains a pathway for growth.

Differentiated instruction in mother tongue lessons depends on pedagogical conditions that make variability coherent, equitable, and sustainable. This thesis demonstrates that differentiation becomes feasible when resources provide embedded scaffolds, time is protected through predictable lesson cycles and efficient

transitions, assessment is criterion-referenced and revision-oriented, and class composition is managed through flexible grouping and inclusive participation norms. When these conditions are aligned, teachers can maintain common learning goals while supporting diverse learners' progress in reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammatical awareness.

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