# DIDACTIC AND INNOVATIVE FOUNDATIONS OF WORD-LEVEL INSTRUCTION METHODOLOGY IN PRIMARY SCHOOL NATIVE LANGUAGE LESSONS

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***https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20665017***

***Abstract.*** *This article examines the didactic and innovative foundations of word-level instruction in primary school native language lessons. It highlights vocabulary work as a key means of enriching pupils' lexical repertoire, improving oral and written speech, and developing logical, creative, and communicative competence. The study analyzes methods for explaining word meanings, including contextual explanation, dictionary use, synonyms, antonyms, descriptive clarification, essential characteristics, and examples. Particular attention is given to practical work with synonyms, antonyms, polysemous words, homonyms, proverbs, and phraseological units as effective tools for strengthening students' expressive ability and speech culture. The article also emphasizes the importance of interactive methods, digital technologies, and teacher methodological competence in increasing lesson effectiveness and learner motivation. It concludes that systematic, purposeful, and innovative word-level instruction supports linguistic development and contributes to improving the quality of primary education and preparing learners for more independent, meaningful, and accurate language use in subsequent stages of schooling.*

***Keywords:*** *word-level instruction, didactic foundations, innovative approach, vocabulary, synonyms, antonyms, speech development, communicative competence, interactive methods, pedagogical technologies, educational effectiveness, linguodidactics.*

## Introduction

The normative-directive documents defining the content of the continuous education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan - including the Law on Education, Presidential Decree No. PQ-4623 on Further Development of the Pedagogical Education Sector, Presidential Decree No. PF-6079 approving the "Digital Uzbekistan–2030" Strategy and measures for its effective implementation, speeches and works of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan regarding teachers and the improvement of education, resolutions of the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and orders of the Ministries of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education and of Preschool and School Education - along with pedagogical and psychological sources related to the topic, constitute the documentary basis of this study.

Explaining the meanings of words enriches students' vocabulary and promotes speech development. The terminology of subjects taught in primary grades is also included among words whose meanings must be clarified. Explaining the meaning of a term helps students gain a thorough understanding of the concept it denotes. For example, by explaining the meaning of the term "subject" (predmet), students learn that it is used broadly - that all objects, phenomena, and concepts in nature are called subjects. This helps them quickly grasp terms such as noun, adjective, numeral, and verb. Explaining word meanings should take very little time and must not distract students' attention from the main topic of the lesson. To this end, the teacher, while preparing for

each lesson, identifies words whose meanings need to be clarified, selects the most convenient method of explanation, and determines at which point in the lesson the clarification should occur. Certain words appearing for the first time in reading texts - words students do not know - are explained before reading the text. Interrupting the reading process to explain word meanings should be avoided. If it becomes necessary to clarify a word during reading, a brief explanation is given without distracting students' attention from the content of the text.

**Literature Review**

T. G. Ramzayeva developed a methodological system for word-level instruction in primary school native language lessons, substantiating ways to enhance students' verbal activity through work with synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms [9].

Research devoted to the lexical-semantic features of words has been conducted by linguists such as V. V. Vinogradov [10] and N. M. Shanskiy [11], whose works contributed to establishing the scientific foundations of word-level instruction in native language education.

Uzbek scholars have also extensively addressed the issue of developing primary school students' speech and working with vocabulary. In particular, the research of A. Gulomov [8], N. Mahmudov [12], H. Nematov [13], R. Qo'ng'urov [14], and Sh. Rahmatullayev [15] provides in-depth analysis of vocabulary enrichment, speech culture formation, and work with lexical units.

In the field of primary education methodology, the scholarly works of S. Matchonov [16], B. Xodjayev [17], M. Abdullayeva [18], and Z. Ismoilova [19] have developed effective methods and techniques for speech development in native language lessons, illuminating the didactic potential of word-level instruction.

Figurative words used in a transferred sense and artistic speech units are explained after the text has been read, since their meaning is best understood from the content and context of the text. This is especially true when reading fables: allegorical and figuratively used words cannot be explained before or during the reading of the work.

**Research Methods**

In many cases, a student may know the meaning of a word yet rarely use it in speech. To overcome this, practical exercises are highly effective: replacing a specific word in a text with its synonyms, related words, or antonyms, and finding and inserting an appropriate word in place of ellipses in accordance with the meaning [8, p. 313].

Methodology employs the following techniques for explaining words:

1. Contextual explanation**.** Here, the unfamiliar word is explained through a sentence (or text) containing words familiar to the students.

2. Dictionary-based explanation**.** The word's meaning is clarified using a dictionary or the annotations provided beneath the text in reading books. It is essential to train students to use annotations independently and to derive word meanings on their own.

3. Explanation through synonyms**.** For example: sabo - shabada (breeze), mudofaa - himoya (defense), sozanda - musiqachi (musician), diyor - vatan (homeland), inshoot - bino (building), samo - osmon (sky). When explaining a word by selecting a synonym, its stylistic significance must also be indicated.

4. Explanation through contrast (antonyms). An unfamiliar concept is explained by comparing it to a familiar concept - its antonym. For example, the concept of "industrious" (ishchan) can be explained by contrasting it with "lazy" (dangasa); the word "truthful" (rostgo'y) by contrasting it with "liar" (yolg'onchi). Words and phrases used in a figurative sense, figures of speech, and proverbs may also be explained using the contrast method.

5. Paraphrase (descriptive explanation). The explanation must be brief and precise. For example: o'zboshimchalik - acting entirely according to one's own will, doing things as one pleases; mutaxassis - a specialist in a particular craft; shunqor - a far-flying, sharp-sighted bird; mesh - a vessel made from cattle hide; guldon - a vessel used to hold flowers.

Some words are explained by describing their function. For example: kombayn (combine harvester) - an agricultural machine that simultaneously reaps, threshes, and cleans grain; ekskavator (excavator) - a machine that simultaneously digs soil and loads it onto a truck; aerodrom (aerodrome) - a place where aircraft are parked, take off, and land.

6. Explanation through essential characteristics. For example: yantoq - a thorny, needle-like plant growing in arid areas; akula (shark) - a very large predatory fish living in the oceans.

7. Explanation through examples. Words expressing ethical or abstract concepts are explained by analyzing the actions of a literary character with the relevant moral quality from a work students have studied [1].

Working on the explanation of word meanings enriches students' vocabulary and promotes fluency of speech.

*Work on Synonymous Words*

Synonymous words (synonyms) are words that differ in form and spelling but express one shared concept (meaning). Synonyms differ from one another in terms of additional semantic nuances, emotional coloring, and usage. Among the words forming the synonymic series katta, ulug', buyuk, zo'r, azim, ulkan, bahaybat, haybatli, yirik, gigant (all broadly meaning 'large/great'), the word katta conveys a broad concept and can be used with reference to both concrete and abstract notions. Ulug', buyuk, zo'r, and azim are used for things of considerably large size; bahaybat and haybatli refer to things of enormous dimension. Yirik is used infrequently. Gigant belongs to the literary register and is primarily used in relation to locations and construction projects.

Synonyms enrich the language lexically; therefore, working with such words is of great importance. The more synonyms a person has in their vocabulary, the greater their expressive capacity in language.

Uzbek is a language rich in synonyms. The Explanatory Dictionary of Uzbek Language Synonyms lists 11 synonyms for the word katta (large) and 13 synonyms for the word marta (time/occasion) [2].

In primary grades, no theoretical information about synonyms is provided; however, an understanding of synonyms is developed through practical exercises. Work with synonyms begins at an elementary level in Grade 1, where students learn to find the synonym of a given word and explain how it can be said differently. In Grades 2 and 3, students are taught to find and produce 2–3 synonyms for a given word.

The following types of exercises with synonymous words are used in primary grades:

1. Grouping given synonymous words. Two synonymic series belonging to the same part of speech are presented, with one or two additional unrelated words mixed in. Students sort the synonyms into two groups. Words may be presented as follows: vatan, maqsad, diyor, niyat, mamlakat, murod, yurt.

2. Selecting a synonym for a given word. The teacher provides the words osmon (sky) when teaching nouns, mazali (delicious) when teaching adjectives, and ko'nikmoq (to get used to) when teaching verbs. Students select synonyms: osmon - ko'k, samo, falak; mazali - lazzotli, laziz, totli; ko'nikmoq - o'rganmoq, odatlanmoq, odat qilmoq.

3. Copying the text by inserting missing synonyms. The synonyms to be written are provided in a list for reference. Students insert each synonym in its appropriate place and explain the difference in their usage.

4. Copying sentences by selecting the most appropriate synonym. A series of synonyms is given in parentheses; the student selects the one that fits the meaning of the sentence and copies it: Daryo suvini (bahor, ko'klam) toshirar, odam qadrini (mehnat, ish) oshirar. Oltin (o't, olov, alanga)da, odam (ish, mehnat)da bilinadi. Birlashgan (yov, dushman)ni qaytarar.

5. Composing didactic material using synonymic series and practicing with it. Four synonymic series are selected and their words are arranged randomly in 16 cells. The teacher says one word - for example, chiroyli (beautiful) - and students find a synonym in the cells: go'zal, dilbar, sohibjamol, husndor. Students then form word combinations: chiroyli shahar (beautiful city), go'zal manzara (beautiful scenery), sohibjamol malika (beautiful princess), etc.

*Work on Words with Opposite Meanings*

Words that express contrasting, opposite meanings are called antonyms. Antonyms are most commonly found among words denoting qualities and attributes. Antonymic relations can also exist between a word and a phraseological unit (e.g., yalqov - yuragida o'ti bor, meaning 'lazy' vs. 'energetic').

Primary school students are introduced to antonyms through practical activity. Work with antonyms begins with identifying antonyms in a text, followed by specialized exercises:

1. Selecting an antonym for a given word. For nouns: azob–..., do'stlik–..., oq–..., yoshlik–...; for adjectives: dangasa–..., anqov–..., rostgo'y–..., dono–..., kasal–...; for verbs: kasallandi–..., yondi–..., boshladi–.... Students pair each word with its antonym: rohat, dushmanlik, qora, qarilik (for nouns); mehnatkash, hushyor, yolg'onchi, nodon, sog' (for adjectives); sog'aydi, o'chdi, tugatdi (for verbs).

2. Composing sentences using antonyms. The teacher provides a word for constructing a sentence with an antonym; students select the antonym and compose sentences using both words.

3. Finding and inserting antonyms in given sentences. The teacher provides sentences such as: "To'g'ri odam ... so'zdan or qilur. Yosh kelsa ishga, ... ketsa oshga. Yaxshi gap - moy. ... gap - loy. Gapni oz so'zla, ishni ... ko'zla." Students find the antonym that fits the meaning of each sentence and read (or write) the completed sentence.

Enriching students' vocabulary with synonymous and antonymous words helps them express their thoughts precisely, fluently, and expressively.

*Work on Polysemous and Homonymous Words*

Students frequently encounter polysemous words, but often do not fully realize that such words carry multiple meanings. In the process of working on literary texts, the teacher gradually introduces students to words used in a figurative sense, helping them understand that certain words can carry several meanings. Specialized exercises are also employed:

1. Comparing the meanings of words in word combinations: soat yurdi (the clock moved), poyezd yurdi (the train moved), ukam yurdi (my brother walked); tosh yo'l (stone road), tosh yurak (heart of stone); kumush qoshiq (silver spoon), kumush osmon (silver sky), kumush qish (silver winter).

2. Reading sentences and identifying the meanings of highlighted words: Bu yil yoz issiq bo'ldi. (This year summer was hot.) / Sen o'rtoging'a xat yoz. (Write a letter to your friend.)

In primary grades, no theoretical information is provided on polysemous and homonymous (homonym) words; rather, preparatory groundwork is laid for forming these concepts.

Proverbs play a significant role in enriching students' speech. Proverbs are highly convenient material for reading, conversation, storytelling, grammatical analysis, and writing. They are concise, meaningful, and expressive; they cultivate students' aesthetic sensibility, teach careful attention to language, promote correct and logical thinking, and hold an important place in aesthetic education.

Students read proverbs and connect them to the moral themes of the text they have studied and to life situations, explaining their figurative meaning and the meanings of specific words and expressions. As a result, students begin to use proverbs appropriately in context.

Proverbs are used as conclusions to literary works and help students grasp the meaning of many texts. Taking this into account, the teacher uses varied exercises with proverbs to practically instill in students an understanding of the figurative and polysemous nature of words.

The use of phraseological units (idioms) in speech enhances its expressiveness and artistic quality. In everyday life, we constantly employ various phraseological expressions. Below is an analysis of several examples:

*"Boshida yong'oq chaqmoq"* - This frequently used idiom means to take revenge on someone, to settle scores. For example: "Hali qarab turgin, naq boshinda yong'oq chaqmasammi…" [4, p. 17].

*"Aqldan ozmoq"* [4, p. 29] - means to lose one's mind, to go mad. Its variants include "fahmi yetadi" and "fahm-farosati yetadi." Examples: "Onang aqldan ozibdi, qizim, ol, yig'ishtirib qo'y bularni!" (I. Rahim, "Chin muhabbat"). "…lekin Salimov aqldan ozib, olti oy psixik kasalxonada yotib chiqqanidan xabari bor." (P. Qodirov, "Uch ildiz").

*"Bel(i)ga tepmoq"* [4, p. 36] - means to obstruct or hinder at an unwanted, unexpected moment. Its variants include "xalal yetdi" and "xalaqit bermoq." Example: "Shirin kampirxonimizning oldida meni qo'llab-quvvatlamasangiz, ikki gapning birida suhbatning beliga tepadiganga o'xshaydi." (M. Muhamedov, "Yurak so'zlari").

*"Ichagi uzildi"* [4, p. 114] - used to mean to laugh uncontrollably. Its variants are "ichagi uzilguday" and "ichagi uzilib." Example: "Hamma to'xtaganda ham, Pochchayev ichagi uzulguday bo'lib qah-qah otardi." (A. Muxtor, "Tug'ilish"). "Chipor ilonni ko'rgan odamlar o'rinlaridan turib ketishdi. Sohib bo'lsa ichagi uzilib xaholab kula boshladi." (Mirmuhsin, "Oq kamar").

*"Kavushini to'g'rilab qo'ymoq"* [4, p. 124] - another widely used idiom, meaning to dismiss or expel someone. Examples: "Kavushini to'g'rilab qo'yish kerak, qurilishni ham, kollektivni ham sariq chaqaga sotadi bu." (A. Muxtor, "Tug'ilish"). "Kavushini to'g'rilab qo'yaman men uni shu bugunoq." (A. Muxtor, "Opa-singillar").

Additional examples of phraseological units include: "kalavani uchini topmoq" (to find the end of the thread - to get to the bottom of something), "kapalagini uchirmoq" (to make someone's butterfly fly - to get on someone's nerves), "kekirdagini cho'zmoq" (to stretch one's gullet - to chatter endlessly), "kecha-kunduz demay" (without distinguishing day from night - working around the clock), "mijja qoqmay" (without blinking an eyelash - without hesitation), and "moy tomsa – yalagudek" (so clean you could lick it). We frequently hear these expressions in everyday oral speech. Their use in spoken language serves to intensify the force of the utterance.

**Discussion**

One of the factors that further amplifies the emotional power of a literary work, arouses strong interest in the reader, and broadens their imagination is the wider use of phraseological units. Among writers who placed particular emphasis on this is O'tkir Hoshimov. His works are distinguished by their thorough revelation of each character's not only external but also inner

world. A reader engaging with his works lives alongside the characters at every moment, breathes with them - weeps with them when needed, sharing their joys and sorrows. In descriptions of nature, the reader feels as though they have literally been transported to the depicted place. While reading Hoshimov's works such as "Ikki eshik orasi", "Bahor qaytmaydi", "Dunyoning ishlari", and "Tushda kechgan umrlar", one encounters numerous phraseological units [5, p. 28]. Upon close examination, some idioms appear in their original form, while others are found in modified variants.

*"Pinakka ketmoq"* - this idiom is used to mean to fall asleep or to become lost in thought [6, p. 10]. "Alimardon yaproqlarning pirpirab uchishini tomosha qila-qila pinakka ketdi…" In Sh. Rahmatullayev's dictionary, similar expressions include "ko'zi ketibdi" and "ko'zi ilinibdi."

*"Damini rostlamoq"* - meaning to pause and catch one's breath, to rest [4, p. 207]. Its synonym is the idiom "nafasini rostlamoq." An example from "Bahor qaytmaydi": "…Onam 'oq o'rab' kelganidan beri quda tomonni og'zidan bol tomib maqtaydi...", "Matematika o'qituvchisi Xakimov katta tanaffusda og'zidan bol tomib yaponlarni maqtabdi..." [6, p. 7].

If we pay close attention to most phraseological units, we observe that they originally consisted of separate, independent words in the language. Over time, through their constant use in fixed communicative patterns, they gradually merged into single unified units - phraseological units. As the language actively develops, the positions of certain words within phraseological expressions are replaced by other words. For example, the word salla (turban) in the idiom "sallani ol desa, kallani olmoq" (asked for the turban, takes the head) has undergone change over time, and since salla is now an archaic word, do'ppi (skullcap) is used in its place: "do'ppini ol desa, kalla olmoq."

The method must be chosen in such a way that the student can feel at ease, express thoughts fluently, and achieve thorough mastery of the topic. It is known that there are currently more than one hundred types of interactive methods, the majority of which have been tested and shown to yield strong results.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, systematic and purposeful word-level instruction in primary school native language lessons constitutes an important didactic factor in expanding students' vocabulary, developing their oral and written speech, and forming independent and logical thinking skills. Lessons oriented toward teaching the meaning, form, scope of use, and stylistic features of words serve to develop students' communicative competence.

The innovative pedagogical approaches, interactive methods, and digital educational tools analyzed in this article were shown to enhance the effectiveness of word-level instruction and to promote greater student engagement and motivation in the learning process. At the same time, it was emphasized that the teacher's methodological proficiency, the organization of the lesson in accordance with contemporary educational requirements, and consideration of students' age and individual characteristics are among the primary conditions for achieving high results.

In the future, the broader application of digital technologies, artificial intelligence-based educational tools, and competency-based approaches in refining word-level instruction methodology will serve to improve the quality of primary education and to further develop students' linguistic competence.

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