

THE ROLE OF VOCABULARY WORK IN SPEECH DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: This article provides information on the aspects of working on vocabulary during primary school Mother Tongue and Reading Literacy classes to develop students' speech.

Keywords: language, seme, vocabulary (dictionary), speech, method, technique, homonym, synonym.

In the materials of various genres provided in primary school Mother Tongue and Reading Literacy textbooks, young students who are just entering the world of books encounter words that express new lexical-semantic meanings. For instance, in the first section of the 4th-grade "Reading" textbook, within Safar Barnoyev's popular science article titled "*A Day Worthy of Eternity*", students encounter lexical-semantic groups such as: phrases representing states/realizations like *ko'zimiz ochildi* (our eyes were opened) – *haqiqatni tushundik* (we understood the truth); titles/ranks like *Sohibqiron* (Sovereign) – *shoh, podshoh* (king, king); words expressing religious concepts like *Alayhissalom* (Peace be upon him) – *payg'ambar* (prophet); and words representing traditional concepts of permanence like *abadiy* (eternal) – *mangu, doimiy* (everlasting, constant).

In the primary school curriculum, "mother tongue and reading are essential factors for enriching children's vocabulary, developing connected speech, maturing literary-aesthetic thinking, shaping speech culture, and ensuring the expressiveness of speech." These tasks are carried out through studying grammatical topics, observing and analyzing exercise texts, and performing special lexical-grammatical exercises. The primary goal of teaching the mother tongue is determined by the role and function of language in society. Language is a means of communication, as speakers express their thoughts through language, and listeners comprehend the thoughts materialized through linguistic means. The mother tongue subject prepares students for the activities of expressing and understanding thoughts. Thought is realized through language; therefore, everyone needs to know the language and how to use it. Knowing a language does not only mean mastering its grammatical rules and definitions, but also knowing how to practically utilize the rich possibilities of the mother tongue—meaning the ability to express thoughts correctly, clearly, and grammatically in both oral and written forms. To achieve this, special attention should be paid to vocabulary work during mother tongue lessons. Vocabulary work takes into account the meaning, pronunciation, and spelling of words. The main goal of working on these aspects is to ensure that students can use them in their speech when needed and comprehend the speech of others. For this purpose, the teacher must pay close attention to the meaning of every word used in mother tongue lessons

and educational processes—such as excursions, mutual conversations, and various events—and determine which ones require special work. In order for students to master the vocabulary wealth of the language, words and their meanings are introduced in mother tongue lessons as follows:

Students may encounter certain words and phrases in the textbook for the first time. Even if a word is not newly coined, the student does not know its meaning; thus, it is considered a new word for them. For example, in the 1st-grade "Mother Tongue" textbook, they encounter words like *habib* (friend), *darparda* (a window curtain made of transparent paper instead of glass), *mag'rur* (proud/arrogant; antonym: humble), *kamol* (fully mature, complete; *kamol topmoq* / to mature – antonym: *xazon bo'lmoq* / to fade away), *xaroba* (ruins left neglected), *qardosh* (friend, brother, relative), *saqdosh* (comrade-in-arms, colleague in an organization), *sarkarda* (commander, military leader), *zeb* (decoration, beauty, grace), and *qasr* (luxurious palace, castle). The meanings of such words can be explained by expanding them through synonyms, explaining them using words with opposite meanings (antonyms), unlocking their meaning by constructing sentences, or forming concepts through pictures. Working in this manner creates sensitivity in students toward word meanings.

Students may understand one meaning of polysemous (multi-meaning) words but might not know their other meanings. Children cannot master all meanings of words at once. Mastering their meaning is carried out step-by-step. While students in grades 1–2 become familiar with one or two meanings of a polysemous word, they learn other meanings in grades 3–4. During the process of studying all levels of language: phonetics, vocabulary, word structure, morphology, and syntax (in primary school, these sections are named "Sounds and Letters," "Word," "Sentence," and "Connected Speech"), the meanings of figurative expressions, idioms, synonyms, homonyms, and antonyms are explained through various types of activities. For instance, when explaining the phrase "*niyati buzuiq*" (having bad/corrupt intentions), the following questions and tasks can be used:

- Compare this phrase with the collocation "*soat buzuiq*" (the clock is broken).
- Which one is used in its literal meaning? (*soat buzuiq*)
- Which collocation is used in a figurative meaning? (*fikri buzuiq* / corrupt thoughts)
- What meaning does the phrase "*niyati buzuiq*" express? (Students reflect and explain that people with bad intentions are called "*niyati buzuiq*").

Evidently, the method of comparison is considered an effective way to explain word meanings. Phrases like "*qulooh otib*" (reaching out wide / taking full stride), „*tanbeh yedi*" (got scolded), "*ko'zi o'ynar*" (restless eyes / shifty-eyed), and "*qalbi olov*" (passionate heart) are also worked on in this manner. Working on artistic-descriptive language tools in the 1st-grade textbook such as "*Khiva is the interpreter of mother history*," "*we completely blocked the road to war*," "*if we adorn the meaning*," "*we come as a caravan*" ("*The Cranes*"), "*a smile ran across their face*," "*spring led the white cloud away*"; and in the 2nd-grade textbook like "*they shaved the hair and beard of the trees*," "*the trees we whitewashed*

wore white socks" encourages the student to use words and phrases correctly and appropriately in speech, and increases the emotional expressiveness of their speech.

Some words belonging to the literary language are rarely used in students' everyday speech. The student does not fully understand the meaning of such words. Instead, they use colloquial, obsolete, or dialectal words. To replace them with literary words, the teacher needs to create situations and needs that compel students to use them in speech. For example: *jim - tinch - osuda - osoyishta* (quiet - peaceful - calm - tranquil), *yurakdan - dildan* (from the heart - sincerely), *soat strelkasi - soat millari* (clock hands), *garmdori - qalampir* (hot pepper - pepper), *daqiq - daqiqa* (minute), *rayon - tuman* (district). To activate the use of words, students' attention is drawn to replacing certain words with others during written work as well. In the 1st grade, when students compose oral stories based on pictures, it is required that their speech units differ from one another and that they do not simply repeat each other's words. For example: *shirinsuxan - shirinso'z* (sweet-spoken), *nasim - tongi yel* (breeze - morning wind), *tanbeh berdi - dashnom berdi* (reproached / scolded), *zilol suv - tiniq suv* (pure water - clear water), *kichik - mo'jaz* (small - compact/tiny), *tik - adil* (straight - upright), *nafis - nozik* (elegant - delicate). During the preparation process for writing a written essay (2nd grade), attention should also be paid to replacing words with others and choosing literary words. Textbooks widely use figurative artistic expressions that appeal to children's emotions; working on them purposefully makes students' speech graceful and brings it closer to the literary language.

Working on the meanings of newly emerged words (neologisms) also holds an important place in vocabulary work to enrich student speech. Such words are rarely used in textbooks. If those related to children's lives are selected and worked on under the rubric "Good to Know," the student's speech will develop in step with the times.

Introducing the meanings of terms is another pressing issue in vocabulary work. First, the correct pronunciation and spelling of grammatical terms are taught. Following this, their essence is revealed through examples, and then, through teaching and performing exercises, students achieve a full understanding of the term's meaning.

The following methodical techniques are used in vocabulary work:

1. **Comparing word meanings and explaining them:** This method is used to explain the meaning, spelling, and pronunciation of figurative words, phrases, paronyms, and homonyms. For example, *ziyrak* (alert) – *Ziyrak*: a human trait (sensitivity) – *ziyrak*; an ornament worn on the ear – *zirak* (earring). The pronunciation of these two words is also different.

2. **Teaching the spelling, meaning, and pronunciation of words through the observation method:** This method is used in the process of studying cognate (root-sharing) words, and when teaching the subtle nuances of meaning, spelling, and pronunciation of adjectives like *ko'm-ko'k* (bright blue/green), *oppoq* (snow-white), and *qip-qizil* (crimson red). For example, students observe the structure of words like *guldon* (vase), *gulchi* (florist), *guldor* (patterned with flowers), *gulli*

(flowered), *gulsiz* (flowerless), and *gulla* (to bloom); they explain the differences in the meanings of these words and begin to realize how the language is enriched by new words. At this point, the teacher should mention that learning to think precisely by turning words into one's own vocabulary is the student's duty. The observation method is also used to teach the spelling of words whose forms change: *og'iz+im* $\rightarrow$ *og'zm* (my mouth), *singil+im* $\rightarrow$ *singlim* (my younger sister), *u+ga* $\rightarrow$ *unga* (to him/her/it).

3. The method of grouping words according to their characteristics:

Grouping is a method of mental activity, and it is vital for increasing students' vocabulary in mother tongue sessions. This method allows words to be categorized by their expressed meaning, part of speech, derivation, spelling, semantic nests, and the like. Grouping is linked to the methods of observation and comparison. To group words, they are first observed, then compared. In this process, their similarities and differences are identified. For example, grouping by kinship can be as follows: 1. Father's side: *ota* (father), *amaki* (paternal uncle), *amma* (paternal aunt), *buvi* (grandmother), *buva* (grandfather). 2. Mother's side: *ona* (mother), *xola* (maternal aunt), *tog'a* (maternal uncle), *buvi* (grandmother), *buva* (grandfather). Adjectives can be organized in a grouping competition, such as adjectives indicating personality traits (*sho'x* / mischievous, *og'ir* / serious, *bosiq* / calm, *aqli* / smart, *aqlsiz* / foolish, *hissiz* / emotionless, *andishali* / considerate, *dangasa* / lazy, *tanbal* / sluggish, *ishchan* / industrious, *mehnatsevar* / hardworking, etc.) and adjectives indicating taste (*shirin* / sweet, *achchiq* / bitter, *nordon* / sour, *taxir* / tart, *sho'r* / salty, *mazali* / tasty, *bemaza* / tasteless, *chuchmal* / sweet-and-sour, etc.). The task of compiling a list of words in a specific group can also be written alphabetically. In this process, the following assignments can be used for grouping: 1. Compile a vocabulary list of children's games. 2. Compile a list of poets you know. 3. Compile a list of fairy tale titles. 4. Compile a list of place names. 5. Compile a list of synonyms, etc. These are organized in connection with the topics being studied and exercise texts. An explanatory dictionary of words can be compiled at the class or school level, displayed, and integrated into general use. A "Students' Mailbox" can also be established for this purpose. If students find it difficult to understand the meaning of any word, they write it down and drop it into the box. In the lesson at the end of the week, work is carried out on the meaning, spelling, and explanation of those words.

By way of conclusion, we can add that vocabulary work is not a simple, isolated activity in mother tongue classes; in this process:

- The mental and speech development of children is intended;
- The scientific-theoretical and methodical tasks specified in the curriculum are fulfilled;
- It allows them to perceive the secrets, mysteries, charm, and beauty hidden within the core of the mother tongue;

•The mental, moral-spiritual, and artistic-aesthetic education of students is realized.

Therefore, vocabulary work for students should not just be a simple and uninteresting activity, but rather a systematic process based on a regular and precise plan that serves long-term and ultimate higher goals, implemented as a continuous system.

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