

THE CONTENT OF USING EDUCATIONAL DICTIONARIES IN MOTHER LANGUAGE AND READING LESSONS

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**Abstract.** This article analyzes the content of using educational dictionaries in native language and reading lessons in primary education. The role of educational dictionaries in developing pupils' vocabulary, reading comprehension, spelling literacy, pronunciation skills and independent learning activity is revealed. The methodological possibilities of using explanatory, spelling, orthoepic and picture dictionaries in the process of native language and reading lessons are discussed. It is substantiated that systematic work with educational dictionaries helps primary school pupils consciously understand word meanings, enrich their speech, analyze texts and express their thoughts correctly and fluently.

**Keywords:** educational dictionary, native language, reading lessons, primary education, vocabulary, explanatory dictionary, spelling dictionary, orthoepic dictionary, reading comprehension, speech development, independent learning, lexical competence.

The use of educational dictionaries in native language and reading lessons is one of the important issues in the methodology of primary education. Because in the modern educational process, pupils are required not only to memorize ready-made information, but also to search for knowledge independently, understand the meaning of words, use them correctly in speech and apply the acquired knowledge in practical situations. In this regard, educational dictionaries serve as an effective didactic tool in the formation of pupils' lexical competence, reading literacy and speech activity. In primary education, native language and reading lessons are closely connected with the development of pupils' speech, thinking and worldview. During these lessons, pupils work with sounds, letters, words, sentences and texts. They learn to understand the meaning of words, pronounce them correctly, write them without mistakes and use them appropriately in oral and written speech. Educational dictionaries help to organize this process more consciously and systematically.

The content of using educational dictionaries is primarily connected with giving pupils necessary information about words. Through dictionaries, pupils learn the meaning, spelling, pronunciation and usage of words. For example, an explanatory dictionary helps to understand the meaning of a word, a spelling dictionary helps to determine its correct writing, and an orthoepic dictionary helps to pronounce it correctly. Picture dictionaries are especially useful for younger pupils, because they allow children to understand the meaning of words through visual images. In native language lessons, the use of dictionaries is mainly connected with spelling, pronunciation, word formation, word meaning and parts of speech. When pupils face difficulties in writing a word correctly, they can use a spelling dictionary. When they are not sure about the pronunciation of a word, they can refer to an orthoepic dictionary. When they do not understand the meaning of a word, they use an explanatory dictionary. This process develops pupils' ability to check themselves and work independently.

In reading lessons, dictionaries are used mostly in the process of working with texts. While reading literary, scientific or educational texts, pupils often come across unfamiliar words and expressions.

If these words are not explained, pupils may not fully understand the content of the text. Therefore, finding unknown words in the text, determining their meaning through a dictionary and using them in speech are important parts of reading literacy lessons. For example, words such as courage, kindness, prosperity, homeland, duty and responsibility can be explained with the help of an educational dictionary. The use of dictionaries in primary classes should be organized gradually. In the first grade, pupils should be introduced to picture dictionaries and simple word explanations. At this stage, the main attention is paid to understanding the meaning of words through pictures and examples. In the second grade, pupils begin to work with the alphabetic order of words and learn to find words in dictionaries. In the third grade, pupils use explanatory dictionaries to understand the direct and figurative meanings of words. In the fourth grade, they learn to use dictionaries more independently, compare word meanings, find synonyms and antonyms, and use dictionary information while creating their own texts.

The effectiveness of using educational dictionaries depends on the system of tasks organized by the teacher. Such tasks should encourage pupils to search, compare, explain and use words in speech. For example, tasks such as “Find three unfamiliar words in the text and explain them with the help of a dictionary”, “Check the spelling of the given words in a dictionary”, “Make sentences using new words”, and “Find the synonym or antonym of the word” help pupils develop dictionary skills. In organizing dictionary-based activities, it is important to connect lexical work with real communicative situations. A word should not be studied separately from speech practice; it should be understood within a sentence, a text, or a classroom dialogue. When pupils determine the meaning of an unfamiliar unit and then use it in their own oral response, short story, description or question, the acquired knowledge becomes more stable. Such an approach strengthens not only lexical awareness but also the ability to choose appropriate language means according to the purpose of communication. Another essential aspect is the gradual complication of dictionary tasks according to pupils’ age and learning experience.

At the initial stage, children may identify a word through a picture or a simple explanation. Later, they compare meanings, distinguish close words, clarify spelling, and use dictionary information while analyzing a text. Educational dictionaries also play an important role in developing pupils’ independent learning skills. When a pupil does not know the meaning or spelling of a word, he or she should not always wait for the teacher’s ready answer. Instead, the pupil should learn to use a dictionary and find the necessary information independently. This develops responsibility, accuracy and self-control in the learning process. The use of educational dictionaries also enriches pupils’ oral and written speech.

Another important point is that dictionary work creates a bridge between language learning and meaningful reading. When children meet an unfamiliar expression in a text, they do not simply pass over it, but try to uncover its sense through reference materials. This process teaches them to read attentively, notice details and understand the author’s idea more deeply. Therefore, dictionary use supports not only vocabulary growth but also the formation of thoughtful reading habits.

The teacher’s guidance is especially important at the early stage of this process. At first, pupils may need help in finding the right word, reading the explanation and choosing the necessary information. Gradually, this guidance should be reduced so that learners begin to perform these actions on their own. Such a method develops confidence and prepares children for more independent work in later grades. Dictionary-based exercises can also be connected with creative activities. After learning the

meaning of a new word, pupils may compose a short dialogue, describe a picture, complete a story or write several sentences about their daily life. In this way, the learned language material becomes part of active speech. This prevents mechanical memorization and helps children use new words naturally. It is also necessary to pay attention to the selection of dictionaries used in primary classes. They should be age-appropriate, visually clear, simple in explanation and close to the pupils' everyday experience. If the dictionary is too difficult, children may lose interest; if it is well designed, it becomes a useful learning companion. Thus, the quality of reference materials directly influences the success of classroom activities.

In conclusion, the content of using educational dictionaries in native language and reading lessons includes understanding word meanings, checking spelling and pronunciation, enriching vocabulary, analyzing texts and developing independent learning skills. If dictionary work is organized systematically and purposefully, it increases the effectiveness of primary education. Educational dictionaries help pupils consciously master language units, understand texts deeply and express their ideas correctly. Therefore, improving the methodology of using educational dictionaries in native language and reading lessons is one of the important conditions for developing pupils' lexical competence, reading literacy and speech culture.

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