



THEORETICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR FORMING LEXICOGRAPHIC COMPETENCE IN MOTHER TONGUE EDUCATION

Buvajonova Mohiraxon

lecturer at the Department of Primary Education Methodology at Fergana State University, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the theoretical and pedagogical foundations of forming lexicographic competence in mother tongue education. The relevance of the topic lies in the fact that dictionary use in school is no longer limited to the mechanical search for word meanings; it has become part of literacy, vocabulary growth, reading comprehension, and the development of independent learning. Modern lexicographic and pedagogical research shows that dictionary skills should be taught systematically, assessed consistently, and adapted to the learner's age, linguistic level, and communicative needs. Within this thesis, lexicographic competence is understood as the learner's ability to identify the need for lexical clarification, choose an appropriate dictionary resource, interpret definitions and labels, distinguish contextual meanings, and transfer the obtained information into oral and written speech. The study argues that in mother tongue education this competence should be developed through a pedagogically designed sequence of guided, semi-guided, and independent activities. Such an approach strengthens language awareness, improves text comprehension, and supports the transition from teacher-dependent learning to self-directed lexical inquiry.

KEYWORDS: Lexicographic competence, mother tongue education, dictionary skills, pedagogical lexicography, school dictionary, vocabulary development, language awareness, literacy, independent learning.

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary mother tongue education, the teaching of vocabulary cannot be reduced to memorizing isolated words or reproducing ready-made meanings. It must lead learners toward a deeper command of lexical units in context, including their semantic shades, grammatical behavior, stylistic function, and communicative value. Research on dictionary skills has shown that these skills belong not only to language learning, but also to broader lifelong reference skills; therefore, they should be systematically integrated into teaching and assessment rather than treated as occasional auxiliary tasks. At the same time, primary and lower-secondary language methodology emphasizes that mother tongue instruction includes literacy development, grammar, spelling, reading, and connected speech, all of which require purposeful work with words and meanings. This makes lexicographic competence a central component of language education rather than a marginal one.

From a theoretical perspective, pedagogical lexicography has demonstrated that dictionaries designed for learners differ in purpose and structure from general dictionaries. Sven Tarp argues that school and learner dictionaries should be classified according to their actual educational function and target users, while more recent work on school dictionary entries

shows that the pedagogical value of a dictionary depends on how clearly it presents definitions, grammatical labels, examples, and other elements of microstructure. In mother tongue education, this means that lexicographic competence is formed not only through access to dictionaries, but also through pedagogically appropriate dictionary design and teacher mediation. Thus, the object of this thesis is the process of forming lexicographic competence in mother tongue education, while the aim is to determine its theoretical and pedagogical foundations and to justify effective didactic conditions for its development.

The study is based on analytical synthesis of methodological, pedagogical, and lexicographic sources. Special attention was given to studies discussing the role of school dictionaries, the structure of dictionary entries for children, and the effect of explicit instruction on learners' ability to use lexicographic tools. In methodological terms, the thesis relies on the principles of systemacity, learner-centeredness, age appropriateness, contextualization, and transfer from lexical recognition to productive language use.

The analysis shows that lexicographic competence in mother tongue education has a multi-component structure. It includes motivational readiness to consult lexical sources, procedural ability to locate and decode information, interpretive ability to distinguish meanings and labels, and productive ability to apply lexical information in speech and writing. This understanding is supported by studies that treat dictionary use as a teachable and assessable competence rather than a spontaneous by-product of schooling. Research also indicates that school dictionaries must be aligned with the learner's mental, linguistic, and cultural development; otherwise, access to a dictionary does not automatically result in successful meaning retrieval or language growth.

A second important result is that the pedagogical environment of mother tongue education gives lexicographic competence a broader function than in foreign-language settings. In the native-language classroom, dictionary work is directly linked with the expansion of active vocabulary, the improvement of reading comprehension, the mastery of literary norms, and the development of intellectual independence. Uzbek scholarship on educational dictionaries and mother tongue teaching likewise underlines that such resources contribute to vocabulary enrichment, thinking development, and practical language competence, especially when adapted for primary school learners. Therefore, lexicographic competence should be viewed as a bridge between linguistic knowledge and communicative practice.

A third finding concerns the pedagogical mechanism of formation. Recent classroom-based research shows that students who receive targeted exercise-based training in dictionary use perform better in recognizing contextual meanings, handling polysemy, and identifying grammatical functions than students who receive no such training. This confirms that lexicographic competence emerges most effectively through structured pedagogical scaffolding. In mother tongue education, such scaffolding begins with orientation to alphabetic order, headwords, definitions, labels, and examples; it then progresses toward contextual interpretation, comparison of meanings, correction of lexical choice, and independent use of dictionaries in reading and writing tasks. The logic of formation is therefore gradual: from recognition to interpretation, and from interpretation to application.

The pedagogical foundation of lexicographic competence rests on the principle that lexical information becomes educationally meaningful only when it is embedded in communicative activity. A learner who merely copies a definition has not yet acquired lexicographic

competence; competence appears when the learner can decide which lexical source is needed, retrieve relevant information, evaluate its relevance to context, and employ it in a new utterance. This idea corresponds to broader methodological views in mother tongue education, where language learning is expected to serve not only correctness, but also thinking, observation, memory, and coherent speech. Consequently, lexicographic competence should be integrated into reading lessons, grammar work, vocabulary development, and writing instruction rather than isolated in occasional dictionary drills.

Another important pedagogical conclusion is that educational dictionaries themselves must be treated as didactic tools. Research on school dictionary entries demonstrates that examples, illustrations, part-of-speech labels, and clear microstructural organization are not secondary decorative elements; they are pedagogical mechanisms that make lexical information cognitively accessible to learners. Likewise, planning a dictionary for mother tongue education requires precise identification of the target user, the genuine purpose of the resource, and the learner's actual reference needs. For this reason, the formation of lexicographic competence depends on two complementary factors: teacher-guided methodological practice and the availability of age-appropriate lexicographic materials, including electronic educational dictionaries for schoolchildren.

The thesis demonstrates that the formation of lexicographic competence in mother tongue education has both theoretical and pedagogical significance. Theoretically, it belongs to the intersection of lexicography, language pedagogy, literacy studies, and competence-based education. Pedagogically, it develops through systematic instruction, age-appropriate dictionary resources, contextualized exercises, and consistent transfer of lexical information into speech and writing. In this sense, lexicographic competence is not a narrow technical skill, but an essential dimension of language awareness and independent learning. Its purposeful formation in mother tongue education strengthens vocabulary development, improves text comprehension, and prepares learners for more autonomous and reflective work with language.

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