

Teaching Methods of Figurative Meanings of Words and Their Types

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Abstract: Semantic analysis reveals the internal structure of linguistic units, that is, it helps to understand the logical relationships within the lexical system by identifying semantic relations between words (such as synonymy, antonymy, and homonymy), meaning shifts (metaphor and metonymy), narrowing or broadening of meaning, semantic fields, and paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations. Accordingly, this article proposes effective and engaging methods for teaching figurative meanings of words.

Keywords: Types of figurative meaning, "Mystery Box," "When I was...," "Rename" methods.

Introduction: The meanings of words can shift in four different ways, which are named as follows:

1. Metaphor – this is a transfer of meaning based on similarity. In language units, objects, phenomena, or qualities are expressed by the name of another object or phenomenon due to their external or internal resemblance.

Example: Her eyes shone like stars.

We can explain it as follows:

Here, the word star has been transferred from its original meaning — "a celestial body that emits light in the sky" — to describe the shining of the eyes. This is a meaning shift based on resemblance.

2. Metonymy – this is the transfer of meaning based on contiguity, that is, the use of one word in the meaning of another due to relationships such as spatial proximity, cause-and-effect, or author-to-work connections. [4:103]

As an example, we can consider the following sentence: He made the whole class laugh.

If we explain it, in reality, the word class means either "a room" or "a group of students." Here, the phrase the whole class refers to the people in the class — that is, the students. The name of a place is used instead of the people in it — this is a meaning shift based on proximity.

3. Synecdoche – this is a transfer of meaning based on the relationship between the part and the whole (or

the whole in place of the part). [4:104]

Example: Every head will be counted.

Here, the word head is used instead of person. That is, it refers to each individual — expressing the whole through a part.

4. Personification (animation) – this is a stylistic transfer of meaning that occurs when a non-living object is given the characteristics of a living being.

For example: Spring brought a smile to nature.

In this sentence, spring is described as if it were a living being capable of bringing a smile. This is the personification method.

When naming these types of figurative meanings, since our topic is designed for 5th-grade students, we avoided using the scientific linguistic terms directly and instead created tasks based on their functions and purposes.

Metaphor is one of the main tools of figurative thinking and plays an important role in developing students' aesthetic worldview, associative thinking, and speech richness during the language learning process. According to the linguist N.A. Mahmudova, "through metaphor, a child strives to express his or her life experience in an artistic and logical way, which elevates the level of thinking to a new stage" [3:68].

"When I was..." method. This method is similar to the metaphor-based type of meaning transfer. Of course, we do not teach this meaning transfer to students

under the term metaphor itself; instead, we give them tasks that reflect the essence of this type of figurative meaning. In this method, actions and states are transferred figuratively.

The purpose of using this method is to develop students' imagination and vocabulary.

The teacher asks students special questions such as:

"What would you do if you were the Sun?",
"Where would you go if you were a cloud?",
"If you were a key, what would you open?",
"If friendship were a flower, which flower would it be?"

In response, students construct sentences with figurative meanings, for example:

"If I were the Sun, I would warm cold hearts."

As a result, students learn to think figuratively and understand the essence of metaphor.

"When the Abstract Becomes Real..." method.

This method not only captures the attention of younger students but also arouses interest among older learners, motivating them to engage actively. In this activity, the teacher provides examples of abstract nouns such as love, anger, generosity, friendship, and trust. Students are then asked to visualize these words and express their imagination through drawings, followed by creating sentences involving those images.

It is clear that in this process, verbs expressing actions are used figuratively. For example, using the word trust, one can construct the following sentence:

Trust is a key. With it, I can unlock the locks in many people's hearts.

The effectiveness of this method lies in the fact that students express their thoughts visually and develop a creative approach to language.

"Mystery Box" method.

This method is carried out with background music. It both engages students in movement and maintains an element of mystery, as tasks are hidden inside the box. The box contains words that share similarities in form, features, or spatial relationships. The teacher starts the music, and students pass the box to each other in sequence. When the music stops, the student holding the box opens it, selects one word, and explains it.

For example, if the word ear comes out, the student explains both its literal and figurative meanings.

Metonymy is the transfer of meaning in which the lexical unit's meaning shifts based on closeness or association with related concepts. It arises from a situational connection between the signifier and the thing signified. In this case, the name transfers to

another object, but they remain semantically connected.

For instance, in the sentence "I read G'afur G'ulom," the author's name is used to refer to his work. [2:215]

However, since our research focuses on 5th-grade students, instead of using the term metonymy directly, it is more effective to provide tasks that reflect its function and meaning.

"Rename" method.

In this activity, students rename various objects using words that are closely related or frequently associated with them.

Here's how it works: one student stands up and invites another to be their partner. The first student says a sentence with a "renamed" expression, and the second student provides the full version, explaining its actual meaning.

For example:

First student: "I reached 'Amir Temur' by 93."

Second student: "I reached 'Amir Temur' Square by bus number 93."

Using this method helps students develop attentiveness, concentration, and quick thinking skills.

"From Name to Work" method – this is a technique that helps students understand metonymic relationships, where the name of an author is used to refer to his or her work. Although the author's name appears directly in the sentence, the intended meaning actually refers to the creative product – the literary work itself.

By using this method in class, students can learn to perceive connections between linguistic units and recognize and create examples of metonymy.

To implement this method, the teacher first explains the main concept:

"Sometimes, a sentence mentions the author's name, but in fact, it refers to the work written by that author. This happens through a metonymic relationship."

Students can be given the following examples:

I read G'afur G'ulom today. → I read a work by G'afur G'ulom.

In the evening, we listened to Pushkin. → We listened to Pushkin's poems.

In class, we memorized Abdulla Oripov. → We memorized a poem by Abdulla Oripov.

Hamid Olimjon caused a discussion in class. → A work by Hamid Olimjon caused a discussion.

The teacher said, "Open Atoy's page." → Open the page where Atoy's works are placed.

Then, students are given the following task:

“Make sentences in which an author’s name is mentioned, but the meaning refers to his or her work.”

One group writes authors’ names, and another writes titles of their works. The sets are then mixed, and students must match “which author – which work.” Through this, they perform a renaming activity.

Examples:

I saw “The Ode to Humanity” on stage. → Erkin Vohidov’s work “The Ode to Humanity” was staged.

This week we memorized only Zulfiya. → We memorized poems written by Zulfiya.

Today we will analyze Navoi. → We will analyze Navoi’s ghazals.

Members of three groups discussed Cho’lpon in class. → They discussed a work by Cho’lpon.

I read Tolstoy with all my heart. → I read the works written by Tolstoy.

Through the “From Name to Work” method, students learn to distinguish between the literal and figurative meanings of words. This, in turn, enhances their semantic thinking, analytical skills, and overall understanding of language meaning.

“Find the Whole from the Part” method.

This method helps students understand the essence of synecdoche, encouraging them to grasp its functional meaning. In this activity, only a part of something is mentioned in the sentence, and students are asked to identify the whole based on the given clues.

Examples:

Do you live under one roof? Respect each other. → The whole house is implied.

Submit it with both hands. → The whole body is implied.

Deliver two heads of cattle to the butcher for distribution. → Two animals are meant.

“Find the Part Hidden in the Whole” method.

This is the opposite of the previous method and is aimed at finding the part through the whole. The teacher gives sentences, and students determine the real meaning of the words used.

Examples:

Uzbekistan was awarded gold medals at the Olympic Games. → The athletes won medals.

The whole class got an “A.” → The majority of students received an “A.”

The hospital provided emergency aid. → Some doctors at the hospital provided the aid.

Using such methods helps students better understand

the topic, broaden their thinking, and reinforce what they have learned.

“When Objects Speak” method.

Through this method, students analyze figurative sentences containing objects or tools and come to understand figurative meanings based on function.

They are presented with commonly used expressions from real life and asked to recognize how the objects are used metaphorically rather than literally.

Examples:

The lamp’s wick has dimmed. → Symbolizes hopelessness or depression.

The streetlamp lights up the whole area. → Represents guidance or illumination.

My ears are like a radio. → Means listening very clearly and attentively.

His brain works like a computer. → He thinks very fast.

The clocks have stopped. → Time seems to stand still, or nothing is happening.

He was silent as a stone. → He felt no emotion or remained unresponsive.

Students analyze each sentence by asking:

What is the object doing here?

Who or what does it represent?

Sample questions:

Why does the lamp express a person’s emotional state?

Why are ears compared to a radio?

Why are the words heart and stone used together?

After understanding these examples, students are given similar sentences and asked to identify the figurative function of each object.

Examples:

1. The hospital’s heart stopped beating.

→ The operating room or power system stopped working.

2. The bulb above his head seemed to go out.

→ He stopped thinking or was shocked.

3. When he entered the classroom, the news spread like a fan.

→ His news spread quickly.

4. My phone is silent today – my heart feels stopped.

→ There are no conversations; I feel joyless.

By using this method, students learn that objects can be used metaphorically as functional symbols, which enhances figurative speech, clarity of thought, expressiveness, and linguistic imagination.

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