

*Means of Expression of Metaphorical Thinking in Primary School
Lithuanian Language Textbooks*

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Abstract

The development of metaphorical thinking occupies a significant place in the process of holistic (total) education of the personality. The development of children's metaphorical thinking is a current issue that opens up new opportunities for scientific and practical researches in the field of cognitive potential of childhood; therefore it is especially important that this education begins as early as possible in both formal and informal environments. The aim of the study is to analyze the means of expression of metaphorical thinking in primary school Lithuanian language textbooks. Having analyzed the literature of Lithuanian and foreign authors and the qualitative analysis of the content of primary school Lithuanian language textbooks, can be stated that the development of metaphorical thinking is an important criterion in the education of primary schoolers. The development of metaphorical thinking in primary classes takes place consistently and systematically – new words / phrases are presented; figurative words/phrases; thoughts that can be expressed indirectly; international words are used. The means of artistic expression, which are abundant in primary school textbooks, are one of the forms of expression of metaphorical thinking. In conclusion, it can be stated that the analyzed Lithuanian language textbooks for primary classes correspond to the 2022 updated concept of general education programs.

Keywords: Metaphorical Thinking, Primary Schoolers, Textbooks

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Introduction

In recent scientific literature, discussing the features of human thinking, metaphorical thinking is increasingly mentioned. However, in the psychological, philosophical, pedagogical, etc. literature of the scientific fields, there is still no universally accepted description of metaphorical thinking, but there are several concepts that define metaphorical thinking as cognitive activity (metaphor, metaphorical process, metaphorical abilities, metaphorical abilities, metaphoricality) (Malinauskienė, 2011). Scientists also give different interpretations of metaphorical thinking. Metaphorical thinking shapes the meaning of the perception of different phenomena, and it is also argued that the result of the development of metaphorical thinking is the formation of critical thinking (Alfayez, 2022). With the help of metaphors – visual, written, linguistic symbols, it is possible to convey several meanings that we can interpret in different ways. Most likely, we will not find a single point of view and direction of interpretation. Each of us thinks differently, we can discover much more expressions of interpretations in a language.

Metaphorical thinking is associated with students' learning possibilities, which determine the mentee's ability to relate concepts/statements with experiences outside the school environment, therefore it can be said that the regular application of metaphorical thinking practices in teaching and learning processes stimulates the abilities of systematization and processing of information (“Lapaas Digital,” n.d.). The use of symbolic meanings in practice indicates the gradual development of linguistic abilities and intelligence, which depends on the experience, environment, period of development of children, therefore, active involvement of educators and family members is necessary (Balut, 2021). According to Malinauskienė (2011), metaphorical thinking becomes especially important in the school environment, since there are situations when children's abilities to distinguish essential qualities are required and transfer them according to similarity from one object to another, from one cognitive sphere to another, the ability to move from specific to abstract, from figurative to conceptual, from imagination to thinking in concepts. In today's educational reality, children's abilities to critically assess problems, apply symbols and associations to express thoughts, to metaphorize various texts, which are abundant in educational content, are of great importance. The expression of metaphorical thinking with the help of metaphors in educational content stimulates children's creativity, helps to develop critical thinking, develops imagination, because it combines feelings, experiences, and knowledge, helps to specify complex learning constructs, concepts, easier to understand and empathize. According to Malinauskienė (2011), metaphorical thinking is related to students' abilities to move from concrete to abstract, i.e., by interpretive abilities to relate concepts, phenomena with existing experiences and create new knowledge and experiences outside the already familiar environment. Thus, the results of the expression of metaphorical thinking: the ability to critically evaluate and creatively solve problems, the ability to distinguish the essential properties of a thing or attribute and transfer them according to similarity, the ability to systematize and process information during the transition from images to concepts, from concrete to abstract, etc. These skills are extremely important for primary schoolers and must be developed in both formal school's environment and informal setting.

As changes take place in the Lithuanian education system, general education curricula (2022) are being updated and textbooks on subjects taught in the general education curricula are being updated at the same time. However, it should be noted that textbooks have long been the main teaching tool, today it is becoming only one of them (National Agency for Education, 2022). The updated Program of the Lithuanian language and literature (2022)

distinguishes abilities that are attributed to primary school students: to enrich the language with new words, expressions, words of figurative meaning and international words; find picturesque words, phrases in the text and explain their meaning/ purpose; to recognize and explain thoughts expressed indirectly, to argue why such means of expression were chosen; also, in order to understand the text as the whole message, attention is paid to the illustrations, the structure of the text and other relevant information. In the description of the development of the competences of the updated general education curricula (2022), one of the expected results of cognitive competence is the development of critical and metaphorical thinking, which is recognized and evaluated when the same information is presented in different contexts and interpreted differently. In textbooks, the educational material will be updated and adapted to achieve the goals and objectives set out in the programs, to help develop the essential subject and general competencies and achievements of students provided in them, and to perform the defined learning content. (National Agency for Education, 2022).

Methods


In the course of the empirical study, scientific literature, informational sources were analyzed, in which the importance of the expression and education of metaphorical thinking was emphasized. To achieve the goal of the study, a qualitative research strategy was applied. A content analysis of primary school Lithuanian language textbooks was carried out. Lithuanian language textbooks for the analysis were chosen, which are used for students of the first, second, third and fourth grades.

The main criteria for analyzing textbooks of the Lithuanian language have been identified:

- (1) Textbook structure, content.
- (2) Means of artistic expression (new words, expressions, figurative meanings and international words, figurative words and phrases presented in the text; to recognize and explain indirectly expressed thoughts).
- (3) The results of the analysis are the number of artistic means of expression presented.

Results

The results of the analysis of the 1st grade Lithuanian language textbook "TAIP" by Dailidėnienė, Jakavonytė-Staškuvienė and Kasperavičienė (2017) (Figure 1).

	
<p><i>The structure of the textbook</i></p>	<p><i>4 units – 45 topics</i> Creating a dialogue; listening to the recording; creation of stories according to presented situations; answers to the questions posed; text comprehension tasks</p>

<i>Means of artistic expression (with examples)</i>	<p>Picturesque words/phrases (metaphors): January sits on the throne of snow; play white games; fluff bedding.</p> <p>New words: juggler; alphabet; lettering; fed up; slumber; density; storm; brisk; oak; swell; buddy; cupcake; bog; goose; gosling; dive; subdue; hut; bottom; chew; delicious; snoring; single-family; allure; rinse; homeland; diffuse; buddy.</p> <p>International words: coat of arms; regatta.</p> <p>Implicitly expressed thoughts: spring changes every day; house of pimps.</p>
<i>Findings</i>	38 means of artistic expression.

Figure 1. 1 Class Textbook

This Lithuanian language textbook for grade 1 consists of: 4 chapters and 45 topics. The 1st grade Lithuanian language textbook "TAIP" contains 38 means of artistic expression. The textbook in the "TAIP" series focuses on the categories of new words and figurative concepts/phrases – examples of new words: " <... > juggler; alphabet; slumber; density; storm; brisk; oak; swell; goose; Gosling; Dive; subdue <... >" end etc. Examples of figurative phrases/words category: "<... > January sits on the throne of snow; play white games; fluff bedding <... >" The textbook also contains international words, such as: "<... > coat of arms; regatta <... >"

The results of the analysis of the 1st grade the newest Lithuanian language textbook by Correia, Šliumkienė and Žukas (2023) (Figure 2).


	
<i>The structure of the textbook</i>	<p>3 unit - 42 topics</p> <p>Complex texts are voiced; reading tasks; tasks of perceiving the text; "Owl's Tasks" – tasks of a more difficult level; highlighting the most important statements; visualizations in the text, if the child has difficulties to read; digitized task content for each topic is provided.</p>
<i>Means of artistic expression (with examples)</i>	<p>New words: to urge; wallow-log; click-crunch; translated head-mischievous; squealing – howling, crying; run.</p> <p>Picturesque words/phrases: ‘I pull down the street’; by no means; rules of life; a thought came to mind; the bird scolds beetles.</p> <p>Implicitly expressed thoughts: a dark teacher; pure truth.</p>
<i>Findings</i>	14 means of artistic expression.

Figure 2. 1 Class Textbook

know the Lithuanian language better, and in the presented tasks, after which not only new words and expressions are learned, but also the proper use of those words / expressions is presented. The textbook for grade 2 presents 35 means of artistic expression. For example, new words include: "<... > *curious; haze; sandals; fizzle; to stumble – to slowly go <... >*" and etc. Examples of implicitly expressed thoughts: "<... > *the book is like a beacon; leaves of the book are like wings <... >*" and others.

The results of the analysis of the 3rd grade Lithuanian language textbook by Banytė, Kuzavinienė and Vyšniauskienė (2018) (Figure 4).

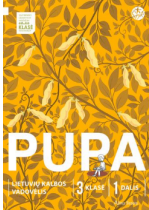
	
<i>The structure of the textbook</i>	<p><i>3 units- 27 topics</i></p> <p>Learn to listen; Learn to speak; Learn to read; Learn to write and create; Learn to self-assess.</p>
<i>Means of artistic expression (with examples)</i>	<p>Picturesque words/phrases: "spider maps"; "science virus."</p> <p>New words: karklas/Karklyn (tree); rainstorms; silk wool; embers; thrashing; white-tailed; Bushes; puppet; glove dolls; finger dolls; dundule – thunder; colic; apostasy.</p> <p>International words: biography; photography; history; geography; atmosphere; crater; dome; reportage; purpura; professor; laboratory; epidemic; chemistry; object; process; graph; diagram; editor; autobiography; procession; muskrat; route; Altar; philosophical; parasite.</p>
<i>Finding</i>	<p><i>41 means of artistic expression.</i></p>

Figure 4. 3 Class Textbook

The 3rd grade Lithuanian language textbook "PUPA" consists of 3 chapters and 27 topics. The 3rd grade Lithuanian language textbook "Pupa" contains even 41 means of artistic expression. Most of the means of artistic expression consisted of international words, such as: "<... > *biography; laboratory; reportage; editor; route; parasite <... >*" and etc. Also, a significant part of the artistic means of expression consisted of words with new meaning, for example: "<... > *glove dolls; silk wool; embers; white-tailed <... >*" and others.

The results of the analysis of the 4th grade Lithuanian language textbook by Dailidėnienė, Jakavonytė- Staškuvienė and Kasperavičienė (2019) (Figure 5).

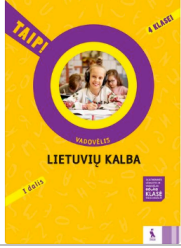
	
<i>The structure of the textbook</i>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>3 units – 43 topics</i></p> <p>Tasks and questions for the development of various reading abilities; in several ways the text is presented; explanations of unknown and less frequently used words; storytelling scheme; tasks for those who know how to create interesting stories; questions to find out if the narrative is based on the scheme; problematic issues; tasks that encourage the study of the meanings of the word. (Developing metaphorical thinking)</p>
<i>Means of artistic expression (with examples)</i>	<p>Picturesque words/phrases: "To heart and lips, do not cease to repeat"; "On straight streets, in four-sided houses, there was no place left for them (secrets)"; "That's how it came out — the two of them, getting ahead of the cities, not stopping where the meadows, the restless waters, are still there."</p> <p>Implicitly expressed thoughts: sonorous speech; gentle speech; smirked – slowly walked; posturing is to have fun telling; smirked – worried.</p> <p>International words: Delta; association.</p> <p>New words: centipede; spit; sea; horn; ornithologist; unique; peninsula; oops; pasteurized; newspaper; volunteer.</p>
<i>Findings</i>	<i>30 means of artistic expression.</i>

Figure 5. 4 Class Textbook

The 4th grade Lithuanian language textbook "TAIP" consists of 3 chapters and 43 topics. After reviewing the structure of the textbook presented by the authors, the elements of the development of metaphorical thinking - unknown and less frequently used words, their explanation and tasks that encourage the study of the meanings of words were noticed. The 4th grade Lithuanian language textbook contains of 30 means of artistic expression. The most common means of artistic expression are picturesque words/phrases, for example: "<... > *To heart and lips, do not cease to repeat*"; "*On straight streets, in four-sided houses, there was no place left for them (secrets)*"; "*That's how it came out — the two of them, getting ahead of the cities, not stopping where the meadows, the restless waters, are still there.*" "<... >". The 4th grade textbook "TAIP" also contains new words that are still little known to children, for example: "<... > *spit; centipede; horn, newspaper; volunteer*" "<... >"end etc.

Conclusion

The change in the general curricular has led to the need and possibilities for the updating of teaching and learning tools – textbooks. The aim is to properly implement the curricular defined in the general curriculum and to develop students' competences. The development of metaphorical thinking in primary classes takes place consistently and systematically – using various artistic means of expression that respond to the Lithuanian national, artistic, cultural

context and introducing international words that expand and activate primary schoolers vocabulary and perception. Summarizing the insights of scientists and the results of the analysis of textbooks of the Lithuanian language, can be stated that the development of metaphorical thinking is a very important criterion in the education of primary schoolers. The means of artistic expression, which are abundant in primary school textbooks, are one of the forms of expression of metaphorical thinking.

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