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FORMATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS' LEXICAL COMPETENCE THROUGH THE INTEGRATED COURSE «I EXPLORE THE WORLD»

The formation of lexical competence is an essential component of linguistic development in primary school pupils. It involves not only the accumulation of vocabulary but also the ability to understand word meanings, use words appropriately in speech, and apply them in various communicative situations. In the context of modern educational reforms in Ukraine, the development of pupils' lexical competence is closely connected with the implementation of the New Ukrainian School (NUS) concept, which focuses on competence-oriented learning and the integration of knowledge from different educational fields.

The integrated course «I Explore the World» plays a key role in this process. It combines content from linguistic, natural, social, and civic education, enabling pupils to explore their surroundings through observation, discussion, and reflection. This course creates natural conditions for enriching pupils' active and passive vocabulary, developing their ability to use new lexical units in meaningful contexts, and forming the basis for communicative competence.

According to the State Standard of Primary Education, language and communication skills are among the key competences that ensure pupils' personal growth and social integration [1: 11]. Researchers such as O. Savchenko, R. Shyyan, and M. Epikhina emphasize that integrated learning fosters deeper understanding, motivates pupils to use language actively, and supports the gradual formation of lexical, grammatical, and communicative abilities [2: 67].

Therefore, the integration of linguistic and cognitive content within the course «I Explore the World» is an effective means of developing the lexical competence of young learners, promoting both their intellectual and emotional development.

The purpose of the article is to outline the main ways of forming lexical competence of primary school pupils through the integrated course «I Explore the World».

The formation of lexical competence in primary school pupils within the integrated course «I Explore the World» is carried out in accordance with the principles of the New Ukrainian School, which emphasize competence-based and integrated learning [1: 11]. The course provides conditions for pupils to acquire and use new vocabulary naturally — through observation, discussion, and problem-solving.

As noted by O. Savchenko and R. Shyyan, integration helps pupils perceive the world holistically and connect language learning with real-life experience [2: 45]. Lessons of the course combine elements of linguistic, natural, and social education, which allows children to expand their vocabulary while developing thinking and communication skills.

One of the leading approaches is thematic integration, when new words are introduced through interdisciplinary topics related to nature, society, and everyday life. For instance, while studying environmental protection or seasons, pupils learn words that describe natural phenomena and human activities. Topics such as «My Family», «My City», or «Healthy Lifestyle» help pupils apply vocabulary in real-life speech situations [3: 68].

Project-based learning also effectively promotes vocabulary development. Small projects such as «My Favourite Animal» or «The Four Seasons» encourage pupils to describe and compare using newly learned words. According to M. Epikhina, such projects enhance cooperation, creativity, and communication, allowing pupils to apply language in meaningful contexts [3: 69].

Equally important is game-based learning, which supports memorization through emotions and actions. Didactic and role-playing games like «Guess the Word», «Find the Pair», or «Who Am I?» motivate pupils to use words in context, making learning enjoyable. The State Standard of Primary Education (2018) defines play as a natural form of learning that fosters curiosity and communicative development [1: 22].

Another significant aspect of forming lexical competence is the use of cross-curricular links. When learning vocabulary in one subject, pupils can apply it in other educational contexts. For example, words related to nature and environment studied in the course «I Explore the World» may later be used in reading, writing, or art lessons. This strengthens the connection between words and their meanings, promotes memory retention, and encourages pupils to use vocabulary more confidently and independently.

A key pedagogical condition for developing lexical competence is establishing a language-rich classroom environment. Teachers should consistently encourage pupils to communicate, share their ideas, and apply newly acquired vocabulary in a variety of communicative contexts, such as discussions, short presentations, and collaborative tasks. Additionally, the use of visual supports—such as posters, labels, illustrated word walls, and interactive activities—facilitates the presentation of lexical material and accommodates diverse learning styles.

Modern digital tools also play an increasing role in vocabulary formation. Educational platforms, online games, and interactive exercises allow children to learn words in playful and engaging ways. Applications such as LearningApps, Wordwall, and Quizlet provide opportunities for repetition, self-testing, and vocabulary reinforcement, which increase pupils' motivation and confidence. As recent educational research highlights, the integration of ICT in language learning not only enriches vocabulary but also develops digital literacy and learner autonomy.

To ensure successful vocabulary acquisition, teachers should:

- introduce and revise thematic word groups regularly;
- use visual and multimedia support;
- organize pair and group speaking activities;
- link new words with pupils' experiences and interests.

The integrated course «I Explore the World» creates favorable conditions for the development of lexical competence in primary school pupils. Its interdisciplinary nature enables learners to expand their vocabulary, apply words in meaningful contexts, and enhance their communicative and creative abilities. The incorporation of thematic

integration, project-based activities, and game-oriented learning fosters active participation and supports the natural acquisition of language.

The effective development of lexical competence requires specific pedagogical conditions, including systematic vocabulary practice, the use of visual and multimedia resources, and opportunities for interactive communication. Therefore, the course «I Explore the World» functions as an effective means of fostering pupils' lexical, linguistic, and social competences, contributing to their overall language development and personal growth.

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