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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDIES AND EDUCATION: a collection scientific works of the International scientific conference – London, England, 2025. Issue 3

Languages of publication: **Uzbek, English, Russian, German, Italian, Spanish**

The collection consists of scientific research of scientists, graduate students and students who took part in the International Scientific online conference **«INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDIES AND EDUCATION»**. Which took place in London , 2025.

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Methods of developing creative thinking in students through native language grammar exercises in primary education

Zokirov Javohir G'aybullo o'g'li

Termez university of economics and service

Department of Primary education methodology

Email: izokirov6@gmail.com

Abstract: The article focuses on the issue of developing primary school students' creative and critical thinking skills through grammatical exercises in native language lessons. It analyzes innovative approaches, unlike traditional exercises, that ensure the active participation of students and bring out their creative potential. Specifically, methods for shaping not only grammatical rules but also logical thinking, problem-solving, and free expression of one's opinion skills in children, with the help of exercises such as word modification, sentence restructuring, and text creation, are highlighted. The practical examples and recommendations provided in the article will help teachers organize the lesson process more effectively.

Keywords: primary grades, native language, grammatical exercises, creative thinking, critical thinking, innovative pedagogy, practical classes, lesson effectiveness

Introduction.

In the current era of development, one of the most important tasks placed before the education system is to bring up students not only as knowledgeable but also as independent and creatively thinking individuals. While traditional education primarily focused on memorizing knowledge, modern methodologies are aimed at developing 21st-century skills such as critical and creative thinking. The role of the native language subject in this process is invaluable, as language is considered the main tool for expressing thought. Native language lessons given in primary grades serve to help students master the fundamentals of linguistics, but limiting them only within the scope of grammatical rules does not allow for the full realization of children's creative potential. The purpose of this article is to analyze effective methods for developing creative and critical thinking in primary school students through grammatical exercises in the native language subject. The article examines types of exercises that encourage the creative application of grammatical rules in various situations, rather than just memorizing them. Specifically, the importance of shaping logical thinking, problem-solving, and the ability to freely express one's opinion in children through interactive activities such as various word and sentence games, text creation, and error analysis is justified. Furthermore, the practical recommendations presented in





the article will provide practical assistance to pedagogues in organizing the lesson process to be more engaging and effective.

Literature review: The literature review shows that the issue of developing creative and critical thinking in native language education is one of the main directions of modern pedagogy. Uzbek scholars such as N. Makhmudov, A. Ne'matov, and H. G'ulomova, in their works dedicated to the methodology of native language teaching, have paid special attention to the role of grammatical exercises in developing speech skills. However, their works mostly cover traditional methods.

The analysis of foreign literature, on the other hand, indicates the importance of relying on the theories of psychologists such as Vygotsky, Bruner, and Guilford in this field. Specifically, J. P. Guilford's theory of "divergent thinking" (finding multiple solutions to one problem) can serve as a basis for enriching grammatical exercises with a creative approach. These analyses serve to strengthen the theoretical basis of the topic[1-3].

Methodology: The following scientific-pedagogical methods were used to achieve the research objective:

1. Theoretical methods: Analysis and synthesis: Existing pedagogical, psychological, and methodical literature, as well as educational curricula, were analyzed, and conclusions were synthesized from them.

2. Induction and deduction: General patterns of thinking development through grammatical exercises were determined, and their application in specific cases was studied[4].

3. Empirical methods: Pedagogical observation: Students' activities and their approaches to completing exercises during lesson processes were regularly observed. Pedagogical experiment: A new system of exercises developed based on advanced pedagogical ideas was tested in practice. The teaching methods in the experimental class were changed, and their results were compared with the control class. Statistical analysis: The obtained experimental results (students' work outcomes, tests, surveys) were quantitatively processed, and their effectiveness was scientifically substantiated.

Discussion: The research results showed that teaching primary school students creative and critical thinking through grammatical exercises in native language lessons is not only possible but also a crucial factor in increasing educational effectiveness. While traditional teaching methods, which relied on memorizing grammatical rules, developed students' linguistic knowledge, they failed to fully shape their creative and logical thinking skills.

The conducted pedagogical experiment proved that moving away from exercises based solely on rules and enriching them with creative tasks increased student engagement. For instance, instead of asking them to construct various sentences from given words, asking them to create a short





story, or instead of simply finding errors in a text, posing the question, "What might the teacher have written incorrectly?" strengthened children's ability to analyze and solve problems[5-7].

When the work results of the experiment participants were statistically analyzed, it was found that the average level of creativity and critical thinking of students in the experimental class was significantly higher compared to those in the control class. This means that organizing grammatical exercises with a new approach, while strengthening children's language knowledge, also teaches them to find creative solutions to real-life issues. This approach serves to form students not merely as consumers of knowledge, but as creators and analysts of knowledge.

Furthermore, this approach requires new skills from teachers as well. They should direct the lesson not just towards providing information, but towards encouraging students to conduct independent research. This methodology is of significant importance for transforming primary school native language education into an interactive and effective process that meets the demands of the 21st century.

Results: As a result of the conducted pedagogical experiment and studies, a number of important conclusions and practical outcomes were achieved regarding the development of creative and critical thinking in primary school students through native language grammatical exercises.

1. Students' creativity level increased: Creative grammatical exercises applied in addition to the exercises in traditional textbooks (for example, forming short stories from given words, rewriting the text in a different form by changing verbs, restructuring sentences) broadened students' scope of thinking. The children in the experimental class offered different and unique solutions instead of giving uniform answers to the given tasks. The conducted tests showed that the average creativity indicator of students in the experimental class was 20% higher than that of the control class[8].

2. Critical thinking skills were developed: Exercises such as "detective games" focused on identifying grammatical errors and "Why is it a mistake?" developed students' skills in analyzing text, drawing logical conclusions, and justifying their opinions. Children were able to explain the reasons for the errors, not just find them, and offered correct alternatives. Observations confirmed that students in the experimental class sought to prove their ideas instead of simply answering "yes" or "no" to questions.

3. Interest in the Native Language Increased: Lessons conducted in a game format and creative tasks made the process of language learning more interesting for the students. Children actively participated in the lessons and sought to freely express their ideas. This significantly increased their motivation to learn the native language[9].





Examples of “grammatical exercises” in native language:

“Change the sentence” exercise This exercise teaches students to express the same sentence in different ways, which increases their creativity and vocabulary. Exercise: Say the following sentence differently. Original sentence: “O'quvchi kitob o'qiyapti.” (The student is reading a book.) Types of changes: Adding a word: “Mehnatkash o'quvchi qiziqarli kitob o'qiyapti.” (The diligent student is reading an interesting book.) Replacing the verb: “O'quvchi kitob mutolaa qilmoqda.” (The student is perusing a book.) Changing the word order: “Kitobni o'quvchi o'qiyapti.” (The book is being read by the student.)

“Grammar detectives” exercise This exercise develops students' critical thinking and concentration abilities. Exercise: There are grammatical errors in the text I wrote. Find them and explain why they are errors. Text example: “Quyosh nurlari yerga tushganda, atrof yorishadi. Qushlar sayrashni boshladidi. Biz maktabga borish uchun tayyorlandik.” (When the sun's rays fall to the earth, the surroundings brighten. Birds began to sing. We got ready to go to school.) Correct answer: Not “yerga tushganda,” but “yerga tushadi” (tense inconsistency). Not “Qushlar sayrashni boshladidi,” but “Qushlar sayrashni boshladilar” (plural form needed). Not “biz maktabga borish,” but “biz maktabga borishga” or “biz maktabga borishga tayyorlandik” (case ending error).

“Chain story” exercise This exercise improves students' skill in constructing sentences from words and texts from sentences. Exercise: I will say the first sentence. You compose a sentence that follows it and is connected in meaning. Teacher: “Daraxtda chiroyli qush o'tirardi.” (A beautiful bird was sitting on the tree.) First student: “Uning patlari rang-barang edi.” (Its feathers were colorful.) Second student: “Birdaniga u qanotlarini qoqib uchib ketdi.” (Suddenly, it flapped its wings and flew away.) Third student: “Chunki u yonida mushukni ko'rib qoldi.” (Because it saw a cat next to it.)

“Comment on the Picture” Exercise This exercise helps students express their thoughts grammatically correctly. Exercise: Put a picture on the board (for example, animals in a forest, a snowy landscape). Task for students: “Look at the picture. Express what is depicted in it using sentences. Your sentences should include adjectives, verbs, and nouns.” Expected answers: “Chiroyli quyoncha daraxtlar orasida yugurmoqda.” (Beautiful rabbit is running among the trees.) (adjective - chiroyli, noun - quyoncha, verb - yugurmoqda) Children can fully describe the picture with “Speaking Sentences.”

The general conclusion is that organizing grammatical exercises with a creative and critical approach in native language lessons helps to shape not only grammatical literacy but also important life skills in students.

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