THE RESULTS OF PILOT EXPERIMENTAL WORK ON FORMING YOUNGER SCHOOLCHILDREN'S COMMUNICATIVE UNVERSAL LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN THEIR STUDIES

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Abstract: The paper deals with developing, bringing together, and testing out of the model of forming younger schoolchildren's communicative universal learning activities in their studies, as well as finding out the trends of their progress in mastering the communicative activities. The model has been developed and its components – the target, content-related, processual, and criterial and diagnosing ones – have been described. The paper details the results of summative, formative and control stages of the pilot experimental work. They give evidence about the fact that based on educational organizations, communicative abilities of younger schoolchildren are formed proceeding from the developed model, as well as substantiated and tested out pedagogical conditions.

Keywords: communicative activities, younger schoolchildren, formation of communicative activities, model, pedagogical conditions.

1 Introduction

Russia is currently seeing sizeable change in all spheres of education, which is associated with change of the paradigm of training and upbringing of the young generation, as well as priority of the activity-based approach in the process of design and creation of new educational standards. Within the educational system, personal qualities are cultivated in students by forming universal learning activities which make up the backbone for new competencies. With regard to this, most researchers (Asmolov et al., 2008; Davydov, 1996; Kostromina, 2009, et al.) focus on students' self-education, self-development, the formation of general intellectual abilities in them which are associated with analysis and synthesis, generalization and independence in setting academic goals and designing ways for achieving them. This is why the process of forming universal learning activities, the communicative ones among them, becomes relevant.

According to the Federal law "On education in the Russian Federation" (2012), universal learning activities (ULA) are the total of ways of action and associated with them learning activity ways that ensure schoolchildren's ability to independently absorb new knowledge and abilities, self-develop, and self-improve. This standard stipulates the necessity of forming four kinds of universal learning activities (the personal, cognitive, communicative, and regulatory ones) in primary school students – corresponding to the main objectives of general education.

Analysis of research works on psychology and pedagogy, in particular, ones conducted under the guidance of A. G. Asmolov (2010), allows identifying two units of main ULA kinds corresponding to the key objectives of general education:

1. the personal unit;
2. the meta-subject unit (it includes regulatory, cognitive, and communicative ULA).

In this research, it is communicative universal learning activities (CULA) that are of interest, namely:

1. planning of academic cooperation with teachers and peers;
2. identification of the objective, participants' functions, and interaction ways;
3. conflict resolution;
4. management of partners' behavior (control, correction, assessment of their actions);
5. the ability to express one's thoughts in line with communication tasks and conditions at the sufficient extent of completeness and precision;
6. mastery of monological and dialogical forms of speech up to grammatical and syntactical standards of the native language, modern means of communication (Asmolov et al., 2008).

2 Literature Review

Communicative abilities were discussed in research works of E. A. Markushevskaya (2018), A. S. Baranova (2018), et al. Depending on the domain where the "communicative abilities" concept is used (in psychology, pedagogy, didactis, philosophy), its interpretation varies. By "communicative abilities", they understand the abilities of exchange, direct and mediated interpersonal communication. Conventionally, communicative abilities are the abilities to explain one's ideas correctly, properly, and clearly and to perceive the information from communication partners in a relevant way (Hasson, 2015). The study of S. K. Ovsyannikova's scientific works on communication (2011) allows defining communicative abilities as follows: they are the total of intended communicative activities, ways, and forms in the sphere of communication and interaction organization which enables one to build relationships with representatives of another social, moral, and cultural environment on a constructive basis and which forms communicative behavior styles in younger schoolchildren. In I. M. Mikhailova's definition (2018), communicative abilities are the mastery of mental and practical actions aimed at establishing and maintaining desirable relationships with people in the process of academic – and later professional – activity, against the background of digitization of both education and society.

B. S. Volkov (2010) believes communicative abilities to be a set of intended communicative activities based on an individual's high theoretical and practical competence which allows using the knowledge creatively for representing and transforming the reality. The development thereof is coupled with new personal formations taking shape in the sphere of intellect (Adair, 2016). Owing to the transition to learner-centered paradigm of teaching and changed requirements for FSES of primary general education (2009), the approaches to composition of learning, its principles have been changed; alongside these, wording and conceptual interpretation of individual notions have been modified, too. They have started considering communicative abilities in a more precise way, meaning "actions" (universal learning activities) by "abilities". Thus, in this research, by communicative universal learning activities, the authors understand a set of communicative theoretical and practical knowledge used for dynamic interaction in the society.

3 Research Methodological Framework

The objective of the research is to develop the model and test out pedagogical conditions of the process of forming younger schoolchildren's communicative universal learning activities in their studies.

Tasks of the research are as follows:

1. to identify the formation levels of younger schoolchildren's communicative universal learning activities;
2. to develop the model, substantiate, and test out pedagogical conditions for forming younger schoolchildren's

communicative universal learning activities in the course of their studies;
3. to find out the younger schoolchildren's progress pattern in mastering communicative universal learning activities.

The pilot experimental work was conducted within the period from 2018 to 2021 covering three stages (the summative, formative, and control experiments) and was brought together on the basis of the municipal educational institution "Secondary comprehensive school No. 8" of Saransk urban district. Here, 28 younger schoolchildren of grade 4, aged 10 to 11 took part in the experiment as the tested ones (14 children made up the experimental group (the EG) and 14 – the control group (the CG)).

When carrying out the pilot experimental work, the authors used the following research methods: the theoretical (analysis of regulatory and statutory documents, foreign and Russian literature; generalization, systemization, and classification of research results) and empirical ones (the summative, formative, and control stages of the experiment). At the stage of the summative and control experiments, simulators were used which were developed in Microsoft PowerPoint 2010 software and registered with the Federal state unitary enterprise "Scientific technical center "Informregistr" (No. 0321903075, No. 0321903076). The simulators included 28 assignments each for each of the said experiment stages and ensured measuring the formation levels of CULA. Assignments of the simulators were more complicated or simplified, depending on the children's individual particularities. The diagnosing assignments were oriented to the content of educational subjects "Russian language", "Mathematics", and "The World Around Us". The answers to the assignments were calculated automatically according to the following criteria: 0 points – incorrect answers, 1 point – partially correct answers, 2 points – correct answers. During the formative experiment, the authors used the following methods of training: the verbal, visual, and practical ones; the explanatory illustrative, assisted discovery, and research ones. At the control experiment stage, the second simulator was used; its assignments were adapted taking into account the students' progress in mastering CULA. Depending on individual particularities of each child, instructions for performing the assignments could vary. The quantity of assignments and assessment criteria were similar to the ones presented in the first simulator employed in the course of the summative experiment.

4 Results and Discussion

Let findings of the summative experiment be characterized. When performing assignments aimed at diagnosing the formation level of CULA (planning of academic cooperation with teachers and peers, statement of questions, conflict resolution, management of partners' behavior, the ability to express one's thoughts in line with communication tasks and conditions completely and precisely enough), it was so few as 14,29% of the EG students only (2 people) who dealt successfully with diagnosing tests and demonstrated the high level of mastery of speech abilities. This category of children identified the objective and functions of utterances effortlessly when communicating with the experimenter, named and substantiated ways of in-class interaction, and were active in answering questions. Completing conflict resolution assignments, they compromised, chose answers without recurring to a situation fraught with conflicts, and performed assignments in pairs while controlling the partner's actions. These students composed monologs easily and were active participants in dialogs. In the CG, 21,43% of the younger schoolchildren (3 people), completed the assignments successfully, just like the EG students. The assignments were completed partially by 35,71% of the EG tested ones (5 people). This part of the respondents had no difficulty identifying the objective and functions of utterances when communicating with the experimenter. However, they named and substantiated ways of in-class interaction if assisted by leading questions only, and they answered the experimenter's questions with brief phrases. Completing conflict resolution assignments, these students compromised, chose answers without recurring to a situation fraught with conflicts, and performed assignments in pairs while controlling the partner's actions. Alongside this, they understood existence of various viewpoints but could not give reasons for their own stances. These students composed monologs easily; participating in dialogs, they made some mistakes in sentence structure. Similar mistakes in the assignments were found in 35,71% of the younger schoolchildren in the CG (5 people).

50% of the EG students (7 people) completed the assignments incorrectly. The younger schoolchildren of this group identified the objective and functions of utterances when communicating with the experimenter not without difficulty. Composing utterances presented a problem for them; if unassisted, they could not name and substantiate ways of in-class interaction and could hardly answer the experimenter's questions. When working on conflict resolution assignments, these children chose answers without falling back upon a situation fraught with conflicts but performed assignments in pairs struggling to control the partner's actions. As for composing monologs, the students had difficulty selecting the appropriate words. They participated in dialogs with multiple pauses, there was no substantiation in their reasoning, and they needed the experimenter's assistance for composing dialogs. Just like the said EG students, 42,86% of the younger schoolchildren in the CG (6 people) failed at the experimental assignments.

Results of the EG and CG performing the CULA diagnosing assignments are given in Table 1; here, it is clearly seen that the children have significant difficulty mastering the ULA to be formed.

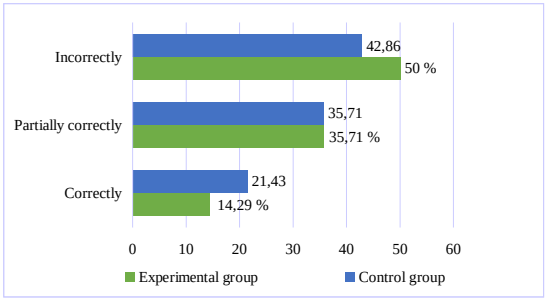
Table 1 Quantitative indicators of the formation level of universal learning activities in the younger schoolchildren

Diagnosed ULA	Answers											
	The assignment completed correctly				The assignment completed partially correctly				The assignment completed incorrectly			
	EG		CG		EG		CG		EG		CG	
	abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%
Commu-nicative ULA	2	14, 29	3	21, 43	5	35, 71	5	35, 71	7	50	6	42, 86

Source: authors' own processing

Results of the EG and CG performing the CULA diagnosing assignments are given in Figure 1 illustrating the primary school students' results of mastering CULA.

Figure 1 Younger schoolchildren's performance of assignments diagnosing their communicative universal learning activities: the experimental and control groups



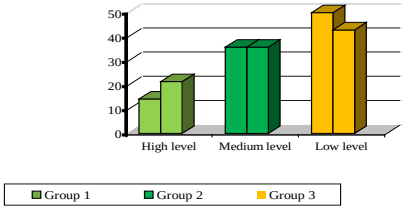
Source: authors' own processing

Relying on D. B. Elkonin's works (2006), the authors differentiated their findings into three levels: 0 points – the low formation level of CULA; 1 point – the medium formation level of CULA; 2 points – the high formation level of CULA. So, findings of the experiment allowed conventionally singling out three differentiated groups of the primary school students depending on their formation levels of CULA. The first group (14,29%) included the EG tested ones having the high formation level of CULA who performed all the suggested assignments independently and could correct a mistake by themselves if making one. In the CG, this group amounted to 21,43%. The second group (35,71%) included the EG tested ones with the medium formation level of CULA who made a minor quantity of

mistakes but needed prompts. Their answers were characterized by the relative independence and forethought, although there were attempts to complete the assignments by guess. In the CG, this part of the children was 35,71%. The third group (50%) united the EG tested ones who had the low formation level of CULA, got frequently distracted when performing the assignments, and had difficulty coming back to work. These students made a lot of mistakes and could not correct them independently, they got confused in the unknown words, too, and lost their interest quickly. In the CG, this group amounted to 42,86%.

Quantitative distribution of the primary school students into groups is visualized in Figure 2. Here, it can be seen that there are one and a half as many children having the low formation level of CULA as those with the medium level, and twice as many children with the low formation level of CULA as the tested ones having the high level.

Figure 2 Distribution of primary school students into groups depending on their formation level of communicative universal learning activities, EG and CG



Source: authors' own processing

Thus, results of the summative experiment conducted with the EG and CG have confirmed the authors' suggestion that forming CULA in the course of studies requires targeted organized pedagogical work with younger schoolchildren. The EG and CG students have demonstrated identical results at the assignments, which is confirmed by the qualitative and quantitative data. Results of the summative experiment have highlighted the necessity of organizing targeted training aimed at forming CULA.

For the integral perception and identification of the logic of forming communicative universal learning activities in younger schoolchildren, the authors have developed the pedagogical model and characterized its components. *The target component* of the model is composed taking into account the social mandate of the state and society as represented in the Federal law "On education" and the FSES of primary general education. The essence of this component is determined, first of all, by the development of motives, interests, and needs of children; secondly, by their realization of the importance of communicative activity. This component represents the target reference points in forming the primary school students' CULA and ensures the coordination of the expected result of the said formation of communicative universal learning activities with the social mandate and requirements of the regulatory documents. *The methodological component* of the model is represented by pedagogical approaches (the systemic, competency-based, learner-centered, and the activity-based ones) and principles (systemicity, consistency, differentiation, individualization) making up the methodological framework of forming younger schoolchildren's CULA. This component contributes to establishing methodological reference points and determines the logic of building the very process of forming younger schoolchildren's CULA. *The content-related component* of the model details the content of forming younger schoolchildren's CULA with the focus on universal activities:

1. planning academic cooperation with teachers and peers (identifying the objective, participants' functions, and interaction ways);
2. statement of questions (initiative cooperation in searching for and collecting information);
3. conflict resolution (problem identification, searching for and evaluating alternative ways of conflict resolution, decision making and fulfilling);
4. management of partners' behavior (controlling, correcting, assessing their actions);
5. the ability to express one's thoughts in line with communication tasks and conditions completely and precisely enough (mastery of monological and dialogical forms of speech according to grammatical and syntactical standards of the native language, modern means of communication).

The processual component of the model represents forms, methods, and means of forming younger schoolchildren's CULA. This component implies the practice-oriented nature of the formation of CULA, which is achieved by using diverse forms, methods, and means contributing to higher motivation for mastering the communicative abilities. The same component includes pedagogical conditions. *The criterial and diagnosing component* incorporates the criteria (planning of academic cooperation; identification of the objectives, functions, and interaction ways; conflict resolution; management of partners' behavior; completeness and precision of the expression of one's thoughts; mastery of monological and dialogical forms of speech) for monitoring the progress in formation levels of CULA, indicators (the ability to plan academic cooperation with teachers and peers; the ability to identify the objective, functions, and ways of interacting with others; the ability to resolve conflict situations; the ability to control communication partners' behavior; the ability to express one's thoughts up to the tasks and conditions of communication completely and precisely; the ability to use monological and dialogical forms of speech according to standards of the native language and modern communication means), and levels (the high, medium, and low). This component allows interpreting the diagnosing data, cross-referencing them to each other, and conducting qualitative and quantitative analysis of the results of forming communicative universal learning activities. The authors believe that in the case of building academic work in line with the pedagogical model described, significant progress in mastering CULA will be observed in younger schoolchildren.

To form the younger schoolchildren's CULA, the authors have substantiated and tested out the following pedagogical conditions in the course of the formative experiment:

1. analysis of the training complex "School of Russia", in particular, of the content of study subjects such as "Russian language", "Mathematics", "The World Around Us", for making relevant the communicative material;
2. formation stages of communicative universal learning activities;
3. the use of active organizational forms, methods, and means for forming communicative universal learning activities.

The first pedagogical condition was fulfilled during classes in study subjects such as "Russian language", "Mathematics", "The World Around Us". The authors conducted training of the younger schoolchildren in the EG, with an emphasis on the targeted organized process of forming CULA at the lessons. CULA were formed in conditions of the educational environment of the municipal educational institution "Secondary comprehensive school No. 8". The basis of the research was provided by the content of the "School of Russia" educational program which is one of the most widely known and rather successfully absorbed by all children. The primary objective of the program is regulation of various aspects of mastering the learning activities by means of the "School of Russia" package, the communicative ones included. In the said educational environment, the formation of CULA was carried out within the context of mastering various study subjects such as "Russian language", "Mathematics", and "The World Around Us". It should be noted that the content of any subject possesses a certain potential for forming CULA in primary school students.

Within bringing together of *the second condition*, the authors have singled out and updated the following six stages of forming CULA. At the first stage, academic cooperation with teachers and peers is planned (during the work, the activity plan for the class was discussed jointly with the schoolchildren). The second stage is associated with identifying the objective, functions, and interaction ways (the authors conducted work on identifying the objective and functions of this process with the younger schoolchildren in relation to teachers and peers, and ways of in-class interaction were found out and used). The third stage involves conflict resolution (during the work, conflicts were found, the problem was identified, and alternative ways of resolving the conflict were searched for and evaluated jointly with the children; i.e., questions were discussed as for how one can perform a particular assignment without entering a conflict, by finding a compromise solution). Next, the fourth stage suggests managing partners' behavior (work in pairs and micro-groups was conducted where the students performed controlling, correction, and assessment of their communication partners' actions; various kinds of assistance were offered to the students). The fifth stage is given up to the ability to express one's thoughts in line with communication tasks and conditions completely and precisely enough (certain tasks were set for the children, and conditions were identified for them to express their thoughts completely and precisely). Finally, the sixth stage is focused on mastery of monological and dialogical forms of speech according to standards of the native language and modern communication means (intensive work was conducted to cultivate monological and dialogical forms of speech according to grammatical and syntactical standards of the native language, modern means of communication; various assignments were offered to the children for them to prepare and present their speech independently or to compose dialogs in pairs).

Within *the third condition*, active organizational forms, methods, and means of forming CULA have been tested out. The following organizational forms of teaching were used extensively: the frontal (classes of various types and kinds), group (creative assignments and projects), and individual ones (individual talks and assignments). While carrying out the said forms of teaching, various teaching methods were used efficiently: the verbal, visual, and practical ones; the assisted discovery, explanatory illustrative, and research ones. The teaching aids used by the authors included the verbal (teacher's speech, word) and visual ones (diagrams, pictures, visual aids, videos, presentations).

Let the students' progress in mastering CULA be demonstrated, as represented by results of the control stage of the pilot experimental work. When performing assignments aimed at diagnosing the progress in formation levels of CULA (planning of academic cooperation with teachers and peers, statement of questions, conflict resolution, management of partners' behavior, the ability to express one's thoughts in line with communication tasks and conditions completely and precisely enough), 71,43% of the EG students (10 people) dealt successfully with diagnosing tests and demonstrated the high level of mastery of speech abilities. The children of this group identified the objective and functions of utterances effortlessly when communicating with the experimenter, named and substantiated ways of in-class interaction, and were active in answering questions. Completing conflict resolution assignments, they compromised, chose answers without recurring to a situation fraught with conflicts, and performed assignments in pairs while controlling the partner's actions. These students composed monologs easily and were active participants in dialogs. In the CG, 28,57% of the younger schoolchildren (4 people), completed the assignments successfully, just like the EG students. The assignments were completed partially by 21,43% of the EG tested ones (3 people). The children of this group had no difficulty identifying the objective and functions of utterances when communicating with the experimenter. However, they named and substantiated ways of in-class interaction if assisted by leading questions only, and they answered the experimenter's questions with brief phrases. Completing conflict resolution assignments, these students compromised, chose answers without recurring to a situation fraught with conflicts, and performed assignments in pairs while controlling the partner's actions. Alongside this, they understood existence of various viewpoints but could not give reasons for their own stances. These students composed monologs and participated in dialogs making some mistakes in sentence structure. Similar mistakes in the assignments were found in 42,86% of the younger schoolchildren in the CG (6 people). 7,14% of the EG students (1 person) completed the assignments incorrectly. The student of this group identified the objective and functions of utterances when communicating with the experimenter not without difficulty. Composing utterances presented a problem, the schoolchild could name and substantiate ways of in-class interaction if assisted by leading questions and could hardly answer the experimenter's questions. When working on conflict resolution assignments, the student chose answers without falling back upon a situation fraught with conflicts but performed assignments in pairs struggling to control the partner's actions. When composing monologs, the schoolchild had difficulty selecting the appropriate words. The student's participation in dialogs was characterized by multiple pauses, reasoning – by the lack of substantiation, and the experimenter's assistance was needed for composing dialogs. Just like the said EG student, 28,57% of the younger schoolchildren in the CG (4 people) failed at the experimental assignments.

The progress of the EG and CG younger schoolchildren in mastering CULA is given in Table 2; here, significant changes are clearly seen in the EG students' mastering CULA after the targeted organized training which was conducted with the created pedagogical conditions borne in mind.

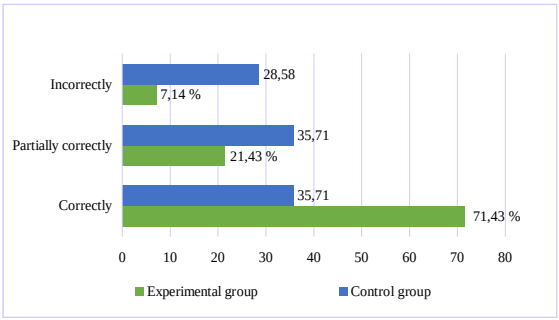
Table 2 Analysis of the formation level of universal learning activities detected in the younger schoolchildren

Diagnosed ULA	Answers											
	The assignment completed correctly				The assignment completed partially correctly				The assignment completed incorrectly			
	EG		CG		EG		CG		EG		CG	
	abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%
Communi-cative ULA	10	71,43	5	35,71	3	21,43	5	35,71	1	7,14	4	28,58

Source: authors' own processing

Results of the EG and CG performing the CULA diagnosing assignments are given in Figure 3 illustrating the primary school students' progress in mastering the communicative abilities.

Figure 3 Younger schoolchildren's performance of assignments measuring their progress in communicative universal learning activities: the experimental and control groups

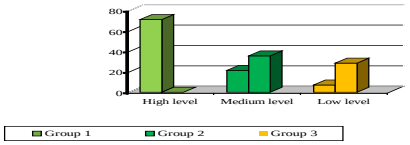


Source: authors' own processing

The findings were processed according to the above criteria used at the summative experiment stage. Findings of the control experiment allowed conventionally singling out three differentiated groups of the primary school students depending on their formation levels of ULA. The first group (71,43%) included the EG tested ones having the high formation level of CULA who performed all the suggested assignments independently and corrected mistakes themselves if making any. In the CG, there were 28,57% of the students having the high level. What can be seen is significantly improved results of the EG after the training conducted by the authors versus minor

steps up of the CG with whom no training was conducted. The second group (21,43%) included the EG tested ones with the medium formation level of CULA who made a minor quantity of mistakes but needed prompting. Their answers were characterized by the relative independence and forethought, although there were attempts to complete the assignments by guess. Here, this group was smaller in number, unlike the CG which amounted to 35,71%, so the result demonstrated by it is similar to the summative experiment one. The third group (7,14%) included the EG tested ones who had the low formation level of CULA, got frequently distracted when performing the assignments, and had difficulty coming back to work. These students made a lot of mistakes and could not correct them independently, they got confused in the concepts unknown to them, too, and lost their interest quickly. In the CG, this group amounted to 28,57%. Again, here, significant progress in mastering CULA can be observed in the EG students as compared to minor shifts of the CG. Quantitative distribution of the tested ones into groups is visualized in Figure 4 from which the significant progress of the younger schoolchildren in mastering CULA in their studies is evident.

Figure 4 Distribution of primary school students into groups depending on their formation level of communicative universal learning activities, CG and EG



Source: authors' own processing

Thus, results of the final diagnosing have shown that the younger schoolchildren did better at the experimental assignments after targeted training. This is confirmed by noticeably higher quantitative and qualitative indicators of the younger schoolchildren from the EG, as distinguished from the results of the CG students. Results of the research have shown the efficiency of diagnosing conducted by means of the digital simulator. Proceeding from the above, the data of the control experiment have proven efficiency of the substantiated and adapted pedagogical conditions (analysis of the training complex "School of Russia", in particular, of the content of study subjects such as "Russian language", "Mathematics", "The World Around Us", for making relevant the communicative material; formation stages of communicative universal learning activities; the use of active organizational forms, methods, and means for forming the younger schoolchildren's CULA).

5 Conclusion

Analysis of literature has enabled the authors to define "communicative universal learning activities" as a set of communicative theoretical and practical knowledge aimed at efficient interaction in the society.

The model of forming younger schoolchildren's CULA in their studies represents a "designed object" which inherits the entire structure of formation of the said activities in an integral and consistent way, demonstrating it in a simplified and clear form. The model of forming CULA is viewed as a poly-component structure consisting of the following components: the target, methodological, content-related, processual, and the criterial and diagnosing one. Pedagogical conditions for bringing together the model of forming younger schoolchildren's CULA have been substantiated and adapted.

Results of the summative experiment representing the younger schoolchildren's formation levels of CULA are shown. So, 14,29% of the tested ones from the EG and 21,43% of the CG students had the high formation level of CULA. 35,71% of the EG children and 35,71% of the tested ones from the CG had the medium formation level of CULA. The low formation level of CULA was found in 50% of the EG tested ones and 42,86% of the CG students.

By comparing results of the summative and control stages of the experimental work, the progress trend can be traced in the younger schoolchildren's formation levels of CULA. A steady growth pattern is observed in the quantity of younger schoolchildren being at the high and medium formation levels of CULA. The data obtained confirm the correctness of the hypothesis suggested and give evidence about positive results of work on forming CULA in the primary school students. Testing out of the pedagogical conditions developed by the authors has contributed to the schoolchildren's mastering certain communicative skills. So, 71,43% of the tested ones from the EG and 28,57% of the CG students have reached the high formation level of CULA. The medium formation level of CULA has been found in 21,43% of the EG schoolchildren and 35,71% of the CG tested ones. 7,14% of the EG students and 28,57% of the CG tested ones have the low formation level of CULA.

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