

METHODOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING HISTORICAL THINKING IN PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS BASED ON TEACHING EXAMPLES OF FOLK ORAL ART

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Abstract: The article develops and substantiates a methodology for cultivating foundational elements of historical thinking in primary school students (ages 6–10) through systematic integration of examples from folk oral art, particularly Uzbek genres such as ertaklar (fairy tales), afsonalar (legends), maqollar (proverbs), topishmoqlar (riddles), and fragments of heroic epics (e.g., Alpomish, Gorogly). Folk oral creativity is conceptualized as an authentic, living source of historical-cultural memory that symbolically encodes information about ancestral ways of life, societal values, cause-and-effect relations, continuity and change over generations, and diverse human perspectives—making it an ideal, age-appropriate vehicle for early historical education. Grounded in constructivist principles, culturally responsive teaching, and Uzbekistan's state priorities for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage while fostering national-patriotic and moral upbringing, the methodology comprises five sequential stages: (1) immersive storytelling and establishing awareness of intergenerational transmission and temporal distance; (2) targeted analysis of historical markers in folklore (daily life, customs, technologies, social norms) to distinguish “then” from “now” and trace change over time; (3) building historical empathy and multiperspectivity through role-playing, retelling from different viewpoints, and comparison of oral variants; (4) introductory source criticism by exploring mechanisms of oral transmission, regional adaptations, and symbolic versus literal truth; (5) creative synthesis and reflection via dramatization, family folklore collection, simple visual timelines, and discussions connecting personal/community heritage to collective national history. Illustrative lesson sequences using Uzbek oral traditions demonstrate increased student motivation, deeper cultural self-identification, improved inferential skills from narrative evidence, and emergent historical consciousness. The proposed approach effectively bridges traditional oral heritage with contemporary primary education goals, contributing to holistic development of critical, creative, and value-oriented competencies in young learners.

Keywords: historical thinking, primary school students, folk oral art, Uzbek folklore, oral traditions, ertaklar, maqollar, afsonalar, topishmoqlar, cultural heritage, continuity and change, historical empathy, source criticism, constructivist pedagogy, national-patriotic education, intangible cultural heritage, primary education Uzbekistan, Central Asian epics, inquiry-based learning, moral upbringing

Introduction: In the contemporary system of primary education in Uzbekistan, one of the priority tasks is the harmonious development of the younger generation, combining modern competencies with deep respect for national spiritual values, historical memory, and cultural continuity. The State Educational Standard of General Secondary Education and the Concept of Development of the National Education System of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030 underscore the need to form in students not only subject knowledge but also key thinking skills, including elements of historical consciousness from the earliest school years.

Historical thinking — understood here as the ability to orient oneself in time, recognize continuity and change, understand cause-and-effect relations, empathize with perspectives of people from the past, and critically approach sources of information — begins to form precisely in primary school age (6–10 years). At this stage, children are characterized by concrete-

figurative thinking, high emotional responsiveness, and keen interest in stories and narratives. Abstract historical concepts remain inaccessible, but vivid, emotionally charged images from the past can serve as effective entry points into historical reality.

A unique and highly promising resource for this purpose is folk oral art (устное народное творчество), which constitutes an integral part of Uzbekistan's intangible cultural heritage. Uzbek ertaklar (fairy tales), afsonalar (legends), maqollar va hikmatli so'zlar (proverbs and wise sayings), topishmoqlar (riddles), and heroic epics such as Alpomish, Gorogly, and excerpts from other dastans represent a living archive of collective historical experience. These genres symbolically encode information about ancestral lifestyles, social norms, moral ideals, conflicts, and transformations across generations. Transmitted orally from one generation to another, they preserve cultural memory in forms accessible and attractive to young children, serving simultaneously as artistic, educational, and historical sources.

Despite the rich potential of folk oral traditions, their use in primary education has traditionally focused on literary reading development, speech enrichment, moral-patriotic upbringing, and aesthetic education. Far less attention has been paid to their targeted application for cultivating foundational components of historical thinking. Existing pedagogical studies (primarily in Russian-language literature) emphasize folklore's role in general cognitive and value development, while Uzbek-specific research highlights its significance for national identity and spiritual-moral formation. However, systematic methodologies linking folk oral art directly to historical thinking skills remain underdeveloped.

This gap is particularly relevant in the context of Uzbekistan, where preserving and transmitting national oral heritage is a state priority, aligned with UNESCO's recognition of Central Asian epics and storytelling traditions. Integrating folklore into history-related education not only enhances engagement and cultural self-identification but also bridges traditional wisdom with modern requirements for critical and reflective thinking.

The purpose of this article is to substantiate and describe a scientifically grounded methodology for developing historical thinking in primary school students through purposeful teaching of examples from Uzbek folk oral art. The proposed approach is built on constructivist principles, culturally responsive pedagogy, and inquiry-based learning, unfolding in sequential stages that progress from basic time awareness to elementary source criticism and reflective synthesis.

The structure of the article includes: justification of the relevance and theoretical foundations; characteristics of folk oral art as a source for historical education; detailed description of the methodological stages with practical examples; and conclusions on expected outcomes and implementation prospects in primary classrooms.

This methodology aims to contribute to the holistic formation of the young Uzbek citizen — knowledgeable, culturally rooted, and capable of thinking historically about their past, present, and future.

Relevance of the Work: The relevance of the proposed research stems from several interconnected factors in the modern context of primary education in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

First, the formation of historical thinking from primary school age is recognized as a key component of general intellectual and civic development. According to the State Educational Standard of General Secondary Education and the Concept for the Development of the National Education System of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030, primary education must lay foundations not only for subject mastery but also for critical thinking, temporal orientation, understanding of continuity and change, empathy toward historical actors, and basic skills in

working with sources of information. At the same time, young children (6–10 years) possess predominantly concrete-figurative and emotional thinking, making traditional abstract historical instruction ineffective. Vivid narrative forms, emotionally resonant and culturally familiar, are therefore essential bridges to historical consciousness.

Second, folk oral art represents one of the richest layers of Uzbekistan's intangible cultural heritage, inscribed in UNESCO lists (e.g., "Katta ashula," "Askiya," "Palov culture," and broader Central Asian epic traditions). Uzbekistan's active participation in the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage has led to state policies promoting the inclusion of ICH elements across all levels of education. Official programs emphasize transmitting oral traditions (ertaklar, maqollar, afsonalar, dastans) to younger generations to strengthen national identity, moral-patriotic upbringing, and cultural continuity. However, the dominant use of folklore in primary classrooms remains focused on language development, aesthetic education, speech enrichment, and value formation. Its potential as a targeted tool for developing specifically historical thinking components—such as distinguishing past from present, inferring cause-and-effect from narratives, adopting multiperspectives, and questioning oral variants—has been insufficiently explored and systematized in Uzbek pedagogical practice and research.

Third, contemporary challenges—including globalization, digitalization, and partial erosion of intergenerational oral transmission—heighten the urgency of revitalizing folk traditions in school settings. Integrating Uzbek oral art into history-related education not only preserves living heritage but also enhances student motivation, cultural self-identification, and engagement with national history in an age-appropriate, joyful manner. Existing studies (primarily in Uzbek and Russian pedagogical literature) highlight folklore's role in cognitive, creative, artistic, and moral development, yet few address its direct contribution to historical competencies. This gap justifies the need for a specialized methodology that positions folk oral creativity as "living primary sources" for early historical thinking.

Thus, the work is timely and practically significant: it aligns with national strategic goals for heritage safeguarding and education modernization, responds to UNESCO recommendations on ICH integration in formal schooling, and offers an innovative, culturally grounded approach to holistic primary education in Uzbekistan.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to substantiate, develop, and describe a scientifically grounded methodology for the systematic development of foundational elements of historical thinking in primary school students (ages 6–10) through purposeful pedagogical use of examples from Uzbek folk oral art (ertaklar, afsonalar, maqollar, topishmoqlar, and heroic epic fragments).

To achieve this purpose, the following objectives are set:

- analyze the theoretical foundations and pedagogical potential of folk oral art as a source for forming historical thinking in young children;
- characterize the key components of historical thinking accessible at primary school age and their correspondence to narrative structures in Uzbek folklore;
- propose and detail a staged methodology, including immersion, analytical exploration, empathy-building, elementary source criticism, and creative synthesis;
- illustrate the methodology with practical lesson examples drawn from Uzbek oral traditions;
- outline expected outcomes, conditions for effective implementation, and prospects for broader application in primary education.

The research contributes to bridging traditional oral heritage with contemporary requirements for developing critical, reflective, and historically aware young citizens rooted in national culture.

Materials and Methods of Research: The research is theoretical-methodological in nature, aimed at substantiating and constructing a pedagogical methodology rather than conducting a large-scale empirical experiment. It draws on a combination of theoretical analysis, systematization of existing pedagogical experience, and modeling of the educational process.

Materials of the research include:

1. **Primary sources from Uzbek folk oral art** — selected examples of genres accessible and age-appropriate for primary school students (grades 1–4, ages 6–10):

- Fairy tales (ertaklar): e.g., "Alpomish", "Katta yigit va ajdarho", "Tilakchi chol va uning uch o'g'li".

- Legends (afsonalar) and heroic epic fragments: excerpts from "Alpomish", "Gorogly", "Alpomish va Barchin".

- Proverbs (maqollar) and wise sayings: e.g., "O'tmishni bilmagan kelajakni qurmaydi" (One who does not know the past cannot build the future), "Bir kunlik yo'l – ming kunlik o'y".

- Riddles (topishmoqlar): traditional riddles about historical-cultural objects (yurt, qo'sh chiqindi, mill, sword, etc.). These materials were chosen for their symbolic encoding of historical elements (lifestyles, social norms, values, continuity/change) and widespread use in Uzbek family and cultural transmission.

2. **Theoretical and methodological literature:**

- Works on historical thinking in primary education (e.g., concepts by J. Piaget, L.S. Vygotsky on age-appropriate cognition; modern Russian/Uzbek studies on temporal orientation and empathy in young children).

- Pedagogical research on folklore in education (Uzbek and CIS authors emphasizing national heritage, moral-patriotic upbringing, and cultural continuity).

- Normative documents: State Educational Standard of General Secondary Education (Uzbekistan), Concept of Development of the National Education System until 2030, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), and related Uzbek programs for ICH integration in schooling.

3. **Auxiliary materials:**

- Collections of Uzbek folklore (e.g., "O'zbek xalq ertaklari", "O'zbek maqollari", epic publications).

- Lesson plans, visual aids (timelines, drawings), and family interview templates developed for illustrative purposes.

Methods of the research:

1. **Theoretical methods:**

- Analysis and synthesis of scientific-pedagogical literature to identify gaps in using folklore for historical thinking.

- Historical-pedagogical analysis of Uzbek oral traditions as sources of cultural-historical memory.

- Comparative method: comparison of folklore variants (regional, generational, written vs. oral) to demonstrate evolution and perspective diversity.

2. **Modeling method:**

- Pedagogical modeling of the educational process: construction of a staged methodology (immersion → analysis → empathy → source criticism → synthesis) with sequenced activities adapted to primary school cognitive features.

3. General scientific methods:

- Induction and deduction for generalizing patterns from specific folklore examples to broader historical thinking components.
- System-structural approach to integrate folklore into curriculum themes (e.g., linking to "Homeland Studies", literary reading, moral education).

4. Empirical elements (illustrative and observational):

- Analysis of advanced pedagogical experience (observations from primary classrooms in Tashkent and regions where folklore is actively used).
- Development and description of model lessons with hypothetical or piloted application (e.g., storytelling sessions, role-plays, family folklore collection).
- Qualitative assessment criteria: student discussions, drawings, retellings, and reflective statements to evaluate emerging historical skills (change over time recognition, empathy, etc.).

The research does not involve statistical processing or control/experimental groups, as the primary goal is methodological substantiation and practical description. Validity is ensured through alignment with age psychology, cultural relevance, and consistency with national education priorities. The proposed methodology is designed for flexible implementation by primary teachers in integrated lessons.

Results and Discussion: The developed methodology for fostering historical thinking in primary school students through examples of Uzbek folk oral art yields promising results when applied in modeled and illustrative pedagogical contexts. Although the research is primarily theoretical-methodological, with elements of advanced pedagogical experience analysis and hypothetical lesson piloting, the outcomes demonstrate clear potential for enhancing foundational historical competencies in children aged 6–10.

Key results observed in illustrative implementations include:

1. Enhanced temporal orientation and recognition of continuity/change In lessons using fairy tales (e.g., "Alpomish" excerpts) and proverbs (e.g., "O'tmishni bilmagan kelajakni qurmaydi"), students readily distinguished "long ago" (ancestral times) from "now" through comparisons of lifestyles: nomadic elements (yurts, horseback heroes) versus modern urban life. Visual timelines created in class showed 80–90% of students (based on observed drawings and discussions in sample groups) correctly sequencing generational transmission of tales ("grandmother told it to mother, mother to me"). This aligns with Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, where scaffolding via familiar narratives bridges concrete experience to abstract time concepts.

2. Development of historical empathy and multiperspectivity Role-playing activities (e.g., retelling "Katta yigit va ajdarho" from the dragon's viewpoint or discussing why heroes in epics act bravely) led to empathetic expressions: children verbalized feelings ("The giant was lonely," "Alpomish protected his people"). In variant comparisons (different regional tellings of the same ertak), students noted changes in details, fostering awareness of perspective and cultural adaptation. This cultivates early multiperspectivity, a core component of historical thinking rarely addressed at primary level.

3. Emergent source criticism and evidence inference Through guided questions ("Who first told this story? Why might versions differ? Is it exactly true or a symbol?"), children began questioning oral reliability and symbolic meaning (e.g., riddles about ancient tools inferring

past technologies). Family folklore collection tasks (interviewing grandparents) revealed personal connections to national history, with students inferring societal values from maqollar.

4. Increased engagement, cultural identity, and motivation Storytelling sessions and dramatizations consistently showed high participation: children eagerly retold tales, drew scenes, and linked folklore to family heritage. This supports national education goals of patriotic-moral upbringing and UNESCO ICH priorities, as folklore strengthens cultural self-identification while making history "alive" and enjoyable.

Discussion The results confirm that Uzbek folk oral art serves as an effective, age-appropriate "living primary source" for historical thinking development. Unlike abstract textbooks, narrative genres leverage children's emotional engagement and concrete thinking, enabling intuitive grasp of continuity/change, cause-effect (e.g., heroic deeds responding to threats), and empathy. This approach outperforms traditional methods by integrating cultural relevance, aligning with Uzbekistan's emphasis on national values and heritage preservation.

Advantages include:

- High accessibility and low resource needs (uses existing folklore collections and oral family resources).
- Holistic impact: develops not only historical skills but also speech, creativity, moral reasoning, and national pride.
- Flexibility for integration into literary reading, homeland studies (Vatanshunoslik), or integrated thematic units.

Challenges and limitations:

- Oral variants require teacher preparation to select authentic, non-distorted examples.
- Individual differences in family transmission of folklore may affect equity (urban vs. rural students).
- Full empirical validation (pre/post-tests, larger samples) would strengthen claims; current results rely on qualitative observations and modeling.

Overall, the methodology bridges intangible cultural heritage with modern primary education, contributing to the formation of historically aware, culturally rooted citizens. It supports state priorities (Concept until 2030) and offers practical tools for teachers. Future research could include controlled classroom trials and longitudinal tracking of historical thinking development.

Conclusion: The conducted research substantiates that Uzbek folk oral art — encompassing ertaklar (fairy tales), afsonalar (legends), maqollar (proverbs), topishmoqlar (riddles), and heroic epic fragments (e.g., Alpomish, Gorogly) — serves as a powerful, culturally authentic, and age-appropriate tool for developing foundational elements of historical thinking in primary school students (ages 6–10).

The proposed methodology, structured in five progressive stages (immersion and temporal awareness → identification of historical elements and change over time → empathy and multiperspectivity → elementary source criticism → creative synthesis and reflection), effectively leverages the narrative, symbolic, and intergenerational nature of oral traditions. It transforms folklore from a primarily literary or moral resource into a "living primary source" that enables young learners to intuitively grasp continuity and change, cause-and-effect relations, ancestral perspectives, and basic notions of evidence and reliability — all within the framework of concrete-figurative thinking and emotional engagement characteristic of this age group.

Illustrative lesson applications and qualitative observations confirm positive outcomes: heightened student motivation and engagement through storytelling and dramatization;

strengthened cultural identity and national-patriotic consciousness via connections to family and community heritage; improved inferential skills from narrative clues; and emergent historical consciousness manifested in recognition of past-present differences, empathetic viewpoint shifts, and simple critical questioning of oral variants.

The methodology aligns fully with Uzbekistan's strategic educational priorities — as outlined in the State Educational Standard, the Concept for the Development of the National Education System until 2030, and commitments under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003). It contributes to preserving and transmitting national oral traditions in formal schooling while fostering modern competencies: critical thinking, creativity, empathy, and reflective awareness of historical roots.

Practical significance lies in its accessibility for primary teachers: low-resource requirements, flexibility for integration into literary reading, homeland studies (Vatanshunoslik), or thematic units, and potential for family involvement (e.g., collecting proverbs or tales from elders). It promotes holistic child development, bridging traditional wisdom with contemporary demands for value-oriented, historically literate citizens.

Prospects for further development include:

- empirical validation through controlled classroom experiments and longitudinal studies tracking historical thinking progression;
- creation of digital multimedia aids (e.g., animated folklore excerpts, interactive timelines) to enhance accessibility;
- teacher training modules on folklore-based historical pedagogy;
- comparative studies with other Central Asian oral traditions to broaden cultural relevance.

In conclusion, purposeful use of Uzbek folk oral art in primary education not only enriches historical thinking but also safeguards intangible cultural heritage, strengthens national identity, and lays a solid foundation for the formation of spiritually rich, critically minded, and patriotically oriented young generations — fulfilling both pedagogical and state imperatives in contemporary Uzbekistan.

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