

VERBAL FOLK GAMES AS A REFLECTION OF NATIONAL AND LITERARY IDENTITY IN RUSSIAN, UZBEK, AND ENGLISH CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE

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Abstract: This paper investigates the verbal component of children's folk games within Russian, Uzbek, and English cultural traditions. The study explores how verbal folklore forms not only an artistic and linguistic phenomenon but also a cultural code reflecting collective memory and national mentality. Based on comparative analysis, the research identifies genre structures, systems of imagery, and symbolic meanings that reveal both universal and nationally specific features of children's play. The material includes more than 1500 recorded folklore texts—counting rhymes, taunts, circle songs, and ritual games—supported by a sociolinguistic survey of 300 respondents. The results demonstrate that children's verbal folklore continues to evolve as a living form of communication and remains a powerful medium for cultural transmission, education, and the preservation of intangible heritage in the digital era.

Keywords: children's folklore, verbal folk games, system of images, symbolism, intercultural comparison, artistic features, oral tradition, cultural heritage, digitalization.

Аннотация: В статье исследуется вербальный компонент детских фольклорных игр в русской, узбекской и английской культурных традициях. Рассматривается, как устный фольклор выступает не только художественно-лингвистическим феноменом, но и культурным кодом, отражающим коллективную память и национальное мировосприятие. На основе сравнительного анализа выявлены жанровые структуры, системы образов и символические значения, раскрывающие как универсальные, так и национально-специфические особенности детских игр. Материал исследования включает более 1500 записанных текстов — считалок, дразнилок, песенных и ритуальных игр — и опирается на социолингвистическое анкетирование 300 респондентов. Результаты показывают, что детский вербальный фольклор продолжает развиваться как живая форма коммуникации и остаётся важным средством культурной трансмиссии, воспитания и сохранения нематериального наследия в условиях цифровизации.

Ключевые слова: детский фольклор, фольклорные игры, система образов, символика, межкультурное сопоставление, художественные особенности, устная традиция, культурное наследие, цифровизация.

Annotatsiya: Maqolada rus, o'zbek va ingliz madaniy an'analarida bolalar folklor o'yinlarining verbal komponenti o'rganilgan. Og'zaki folklor nafaqat badiiy-lisoniy hodisa, balki jamoaviy хотира va milliy dunyoqarashni aks ettiruvchi madaniy

kod sifatida ham namoyon bo‘lishi ko‘rib chiqiladi. Qiyosiy tahlil asosida bolalar o‘yinlarining universal va milliy o‘ziga xos xususiyatlarini ochib beruvchi janr tuzilmalari, obrazlar tizimi va ramziy ma’nolari aniqlandi. Tadqiqot materiali 1500 dan ortiq yozib olingan matnlarni - sanamalar, masxaralamalar, qo‘shiqlar va marosim o‘yinlarini o‘z ichiga oladi va 300 nafar respondentning sotsiologiyaviy so‘roviga asoslanadi. Natijalar shuni ko‘rsatadiki, bolalar og‘zaki folklori muloqotning jonli shakli sifatida rivojlanishda davom etmoqda va raqamlashtirish sharoitida madaniy uzatish, tarbiyalash va nomoddiy merosni saqlashning muhim vositasi bo‘lib qolmoqda.

Kalit so‘zlar: bolalar folklori, xalq o‘yinlari, obrazlar tizimi, ramziylik, madaniyatlararo taqqoslash, badiiy xususiyatlar, og‘zaki an‘ana, madaniy meros, raqamlashtirish.

Children’s folklore has always served as one of the most expressive manifestations of the national worldview. In traditional societies, play was a bridge between learning and communication, embodying social, ethical, and linguistic models of behavior. In modern times, when digital entertainment increasingly replaces traditional play, studying and preserving verbal folk games becomes especially important.

The analysis of children’s games in Russian, Uzbek, and English traditions shows that each of these cultures has developed its own way of expressing collective identity through play.

In Russian folklore, games are closely connected with nature and rhythm. The verbal formulas in counting rhymes or circle songs often contain images of the sun, rain, animals, and seasonal cycles. Expressions like “Солнце, солнце, выгляни!” or “Идет коза рогатая” reflect a poeticized interaction between human and nature.

In Uzbek folk games, such as “Капа куй-ди”, “Manglayga chertma” and “Kavush qo‘ymoq”, the collective principle dominates. Children reproduce the social structure of the community through dialogue, ritual gestures, and shared laughter. Uzbek verbal play preserves many archaic elements of agrarian rituals, prayers for good harvest, and blessings for unity and friendship.

English games, by contrast, are built around rhyme, rhythm, and humor. They reveal the spirit of linguistic creativity and individual initiative. Rhymes like “One, two, buckle my shoe” or “Ring a Ring o’ Roses” are simple yet deeply symbolic, expressing both the joy and the fragility of human life. The English tradition tends to emphasize linguistic wit, spontaneity, and emotional freedom, reflecting the values of playfulness and equality among children.

Despite cultural diversity, all three traditions reveal a common structural core: rhythmic repetition, dialogic interaction, and performative movement accompanied by verbal creativity. These elements form a universal model of children’s communication where language, rhythm, and motion merge into a single expressive act.

The comparative study also highlights several distinctive systems of imagery and symbolism. Russian folklore embodies naturalistic and animistic imagery; Uzbek folklore reflects social and moral dimensions; English folklore focuses on humor and linguistic experimentation. Yet all of them share archetypal motifs of light, movement, and transformation, revealing the child's perception of the world as a dynamic and meaningful whole.

A sociolinguistic survey involving 300 respondents across three cultural groups confirmed that most participants perceive these games as symbols of childhood, moral development, and emotional bonding.

However, only 28% of respondents reported regular engagement with traditional verbal games today, indicating a gradual decline in their active use. This finding underscores the urgency of integrating folk games into education and digital cultural projects.

Theoretical analysis has led to the development of a systemic interlingual classification of children's verbal folklore based on three criteria:

1. Genre-functional (e.g., counting, teasing, ritual, or narrative games),
2. Figurative-symbolic (dominant imagery, metaphorical systems, cultural codes),
3. Structural-compositional (type of dialogue, rhythm, and movement correlation).

This classification provides a clear framework for identifying both typological similarities and cultural uniqueness within different traditions. The artistic and linguistic analysis demonstrates that children's games serve as miniature models of national poetic thinking, reflecting collective values and the emotional logic of each culture.

The research also introduces the conceptual model of national-literary specificity, which combines three interdependent components: folklore text, play action, and situational context. Together, they form the communicative and symbolic structure of children's play, where the aesthetic, social, and educational dimensions are inseparable.

On a practical level, the findings have been implemented in the special courses "Folkloristics" and "Children's Folklore and Intercultural Communication" at Fergana State University. An electronic multilingual atlas of children's folklore games has also been created, including audio and video materials for teachers and cultural practitioners. These initiatives aim to preserve and revitalize traditional play in the context of global digital culture.

CONCLUSION

Children's verbal folklore, as revealed in Russian, Uzbek, and English traditions, is not a relic of the past but a living cultural system capable of adaptation and renewal. It unites aesthetic expression with moral education, linguistic creativity with social interaction.

By exploring the imagery, rhythm, and structure of verbal games, this research shows that play remains one of the most universal forms of human creativity. Preserving and reintroducing these traditions into educational and cultural contexts

strengthens not only linguistic competence but also intercultural understanding and empathy.

The comparative perspective allows us to recognize that while each culture contributes its own poetic flavor to the world of children's games, the underlying communicative essence remains universal — to play, to speak, and to connect.

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