



## Розділ III. Проблеми навчання і виховання молодших школярів в умовах гірської школи

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### ENHANCING PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMPETENCE BY MEANS OF SMALL FORMS OF FOLKLORE

**Abstract.** The article deals with the issue of enhancing primary school students' foreign language competence by means of small forms of folklore. In today's multicultural space we can feel reassessment of existing paradigms of education in view of globalization changes, interstate cooperation in cultural and educational spheres. The article highlights the problem of students' adaptation to foreign cultural environment, the contents of ethnographic knowledge, small forms of folklore in particular, the needs of modern European and global integration. So the paper analyzes and interprets the urgent idea of using ethnographic materials, including folk art, in enhancing students' foreign language competence while teaching Humanities and Arts subjects in primary school, particularly in native and foreign languages, reading, science, music, manual work, etc.

The didactic material presented by the researcher might be used in the process of teaching English language and literature in the system of university training, and for the development of cognitive activity of primary school students at the lessons of English, extra curricular activity, and more.

**Keywords:** primary school, multicultural environment, folklore, foreign language competence, ethnographic material, primary school students, English lessons.

### ФОРМУВАННЯ ІНШОМОВНОЇ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТІ МОЛОДШИХ ШКОЛЯРІВ ЗАСОБАМИ МАЛИХ ФОЛЬКЛОРНИХ ЖАНРІВ

**Анотація.** У сучасному полікультурному просторі відбувається переоцінка існуючих парадигм навчання з урахуванням глобалізаційних змін, міждержавної співпраці в культурно-освітній сфері. Особливо на часі є проблема адаптації учня до іншомовного культурного середовища, змісту етнографічних знань до потреб сучасної європейської та світової інтеграції. Тому актуальною вважаємо ідею використання етнографічних матеріалів, зокрема їх малих фольклорних жанрів, у процесі формування іншомовної комунікативної компетентності учнів під час навчання іноземної мови у початковій школі. Шлях інтеграції етнографічних знань, зокрема українського та англійського фольклору, автор вбачає у розробці й реалізації на уроках англійської мови скоординованих навчально-методичних рекомендацій до ознайомлення учнів із культурним надбанням українського народу та англомовних етносів.

Стаття спрямована на доцільність впровадження елементів іншомовної народної культури під час роботи з майбутніми вчителями та учнями початкової школи; пропонує методи порівняння культур різних етносів; демонструє ефективність використання малих форм фольклору у формуванні іншомовної компетентності школярів; знайомить студентів з культурним надбанням, звичаями та традиціями англомовних країн. Автор наголошує на необхідності впровадження інноваційних методів та інструментів навчання (дослідження, опитування, картографування тощо).

Дидактичний матеріал, представлений дослідницею, може бути використаний у процесі навчання англійській мові та літературі у системі підготовки студентів до роботи у початковій школі, а також для розвитку пізнавальної діяльності учнів початкової школи на уроках англійської мови, позакласної навчальної діяльності тощо.

**Ключові слова:** учні початкової школи, іншомовна компетентність, фольклор, малі фольклорні жанри, іншомовне культурне середовище, уроки англійської мови.



## INTRODUCTION

Education of any foreign language, which is a means of international communication, today has become one of the main vectors of improving modern education in Ukraine. Training skilled specialists at higher educational establishments and their readiness to implement gained linguistic knowledge at schools requires from pedagogical science the increased attention to formation of students of different age-groups foreign language competence (FLC), which is the main condition for the practical command of a foreign language. The peculiarities of the process of forming FLC are based on the modern concepts of its teaching. Attracting the cultural aspect to language learning is extremely important, as modernity dictates the use of language studies based on the spiritual values of the native land other peoples.

In modern teaching concepts, the foreign language is seen as a reflection of the culture of the people, and the mastery of a foreign language - as a mastering a foreign language culture and the assimilation of spiritual values.

Universal values of folklore are considered as the acquisition of world civilization, accumulated over a long period of human history, illustrating the results of domestic scholars in the research works by I. Bekh, L. Bondar, M. Boryshevskyi, O. Budnyk, Yu. Rudenko, V. Kononenko, V. Strumanskyi, R. Skulskyi, and others.

In the process of acquaintance with the traditions and customs, ethnic parenting experience it is useful to analyze the common and distinctive features in educational systems of individual nations or states. "With all the differences of education systems established in European nations - said H. Vaschenko - there is much in common between them. In their development we can see a common way, priority of certain educational trends at certain periods of time, replacing some trends with others [2]. Unfortunately, the problem of enhancing primary school students' foreign language competence by means of comparing small forms of folklore of different cultures is not sufficiently solved. This determines the relevance of the problem we are facing.

## AIM AND TASKS RESEARCH

The paper is aimed at introducing folk culture to teachers and primary school students; providing methods of contrasting and comparing folk cultures; demonstrating efficiency of using small forms of folklore in enhancing children's foreign language competence; acquainting students with cultural traditions of other countries; introducing innovative methods of social science inquiry tools (research, survey, mapping, etc.).

## RESEARCH METHODS

Preparing the material for the article, we turned to the analysis of scientific and educational-methodical literature, questionnaires and pedagogical experiment.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

Why Teach Folk Arts and Folklife at schools? Family and local culture are often the first things children learn. Our beliefs, customs, attitudes, and traditions are rooted in where we grow up, what our families teach us, and what our communities share with us. All children in Ukraine learn about local and state history as part of their educational curriculum, but history is often taught in isolation from what children learn at home. By tying languages, folk arts and folklife into the regular curriculum, you can show students and their parents that there are connections between their own cultures and those of people around the world. The English lessons can be designed to help our students meet state educational standards and expectations. These lessons are also designed to help our students to use their homes, neighborhoods, and even schools as living laboratories. Arts and culture programs in the English classroom have been proven to booster student self-esteem, to introduce teachers to methods that reach their students' multiple intelligences, and to engage parents and family members in their children's learning foreign languages.

Moreover, The State standard of primary education emphasizes that the purpose of foreign language education is the formation of a foreign language communicative competence for direct and indirect intercultural communication, which ensures the development of other key competencies and satisfaction of the various life needs of the learner. The learner perceives information provided in a foreign language under the conditions of direct and indirect intercultural communication, and critically assesses such information; understands read foreign texts of different kinds for information or emotional satisfaction, uses read information and critically evaluates it; provides information, expresses thoughts, feelings and attitudes, interacts with other learners orally, in writing and in real time using a foreign language [4].

Definitions of folk vocabulary and traditional arts are learned as part of the cultural life of a community. Community members share at least one thing in common and often more. Common traits include ethnic heritage, language, religion, occupation, or a geographic region. A community's traditions are shaped by shared aesthetics and values and are passed down from generation to generation, most often from family member to family member or community member to community member. The primary means for learning folk and traditional arts we believe is through observation, conversation, and practice.

Folk arts often influence popular arts and culture. Folklife includes traditions, practices, beliefs, and customs that are passed from person to person within a defined community. Folklife is based also on patterns, but these patterns often vary over time and space. Folk practices and customs, like traditional styles of clothing, often enter popular culture and are sometimes adapted by formal culture. Similarly, popular culture and formal culture often influence folk practices. A good example of the fluidity between these categories is the way a local legend about a local landmark (folk) might be recreated by local media (television or in the movies) and later used by community educators at kindergartens, schools, developmental groups or clubs and even printed in a tourist brochure by the local government. Community also includes families, neighborhoods, geographic regions, religious organizations, ethnic or cultural groups, and/or occupations. A school also functions as a community and has its own traditions and customs



that are passed down and between community members: teachers, staff, students, and parents. English lessons in this guide might be designed to explore the culture of your school community.

To enrich students' knowledge of ethnic differences of the various European and world nations, their features, diversity of folklore genres and its educational potential, we have to encourage them to various searches and feasible ethnographic scientific activities. Introducing students to folklife we put forward several objectives, for example, offer them the theme of change; introduce research skills; help students create complete speeches; enhance oral language/speaking skills or skills in summarizing knowledge; foster awareness of cultural traditions and folk culture of certain countries, etc.

If the work flows smoothly, we might definitely get the outcomes: the students will be able to identify folklore genres; students will use written and oral sources to create researches; students will work in teams and present short oral reports; students will be able to explain how the changes and cultural heritage affect their personal life.

In Ukraine, well-known are attempts to study and analyze national heritage of children education abroad, particularly in Poland, Britain, France, Canada, the United States and more [6].

Family stories and tales might be some of the most common examples of folk culture. These stories are familiar to us whether we have grown up in a city, a suburb, or the country. Every family has stories about everyday and memorable events and special holidays. Families may also tell urban legends, folk tales, and tales about family members or local characters, animals, etc. Urban legends are stories that are told as true, almost always as happening to "a friend of a friend" and usually have some local detail which makes them believable. Folk tales are stories that are a bit fictional. Fairy tales are folk tales. These stories often have a moral and always have a beginning, middle, and an end. They may include magic helpers or special tasks. Humans and animals are main characters. Tales are stories where some elements are exaggerated, for example, the "the tallest man in the world." Their potential in enhancing students' foreign language competence is incredible.

Let's take, for example, the content of Ukrainian folk tale "Cinderella," which British people know as well. The main idea of these tales is the glorification of hard work, humility, patience, obedience, and other well-known spiritual values. All fairy tales actually have the same storyline and characters, but the piece of work of every nation is characterized by a deep ethnographic difference.

Ideas for the formation of children's personal meaningful values and orientations can be found in many Ukrainian folk tales where hard work of a person is praised while laziness and indifference are condemned ("Grandfather's and Grandma's daughters", "Cock and two mice", "Turnip", "How a man taught a lazy woman" and many others). For example, the fairy tale "Turnip" promotes the idea of teamwork, as according to the folk aphorisms – "A friend in need is a friend indeed", "United we stay, divided we fall", "No pains no grains", and others.

Using tales at the English lessons in primary schools, we not only make the classes fascinating but also enhance students' skills in summarizing knowledge, foster their awareness of cultural traditions and folk culture. Moreover, the students will use written and oral sources to research family stories; tell a personal experience story improving own foreign language competence; students will dramatize tales and be able to recognize different types of folktales.

Games of ethnographic content. The importance of using role-playing games in the learning process noted both Ukrainian and foreign scientists. Especially relevant is this kind of work with elementary and primary school students. Complementing traditional ways of learning, games promote spontaneous mastering vocabulary, grammar, deepening the acquired knowledge to use them in different kinds of speaking, listening, reading, speaking and writing.

It is a good idea to conduct with children the didactic game "What profession is the subject?" For this reason, we can use Ukrainian folk riddles as a perfect example of small forms of folklore: Dry wood is singing merrily so the horse is dancing - Dry tree is singing so funny that the horse's tail upon the bank nods (Violin); A cow is running, it is fat and strong, and behind it calves-twins - cow runs smooth, healthy, and her calves - they are twins (Train); Small and white running in black field and leaving line behind - small, little white, on a black field and trail leaves plyhaye (Chalk).

Teachers use the game as an invaluable means of transferring grammatical or lexical material to students. You can use it to monitor the accuracy of certain students mastering the material. Before offering such tasks to students, it is advisable to ask ourselves the following questions: What do I want to teach students through this game? Which skills do I want to check in the game? or more. Various games and similar interesting tasks can activate all types of language skills of primary school students and can be used for individual and group work with them.

This material will help diversify the process of learning English in class. We recommend teachers to use games at different stages of the lesson: at its beginning to get students into the atmosphere of a foreign language, in the middle to explain new material and check new skills, or for short relaxation warming-up period in a game, etc. Using games is a nice addition and diversification of English work during extracurricular activities, contests, competitions, creative festivals, charity events in schools and so on.

Proverbs and sayings at English lessons. Other good examples of usage small forms of folklore are proverbs, sayings and tongue twisters at foreign language lessons in primary school. They are of a great importance as well as other samples, because teaching children, the teacher implements a number of practical experiences. One of them implies drilling students correct sounds pronunciation, developing their speech apparatus, memory and concentration skills in foreign language speaking activities and so on. Proverbs and sayings are an indispensable factor in foreign language training or phonetic preparatory stage to accept foreign language texts.



First proverbs go back to ancient times. Many of them appeared even when there was no written language. I. Franko wrote in the work of "Galician folk proverbs" that proverb is the collective mind of the people. The Eastern peoples call the proverb "the colors of the language, strung with pearls", and the British, the French and the Italians say that proverbs are "the fruits of experience" [3]. The proverb as a self-righteous utterance carries unconditional truth without application to a life situation. Each of them is a moral law that is unconditional for any person whose action extends not to a particular event, but to the whole period of human existence. This is a national "commandment", a certain "code", a set of rules that people must observe in their everyday lives.

However, different nations have their own wisdom. Studying English at school, students simultaneously get acquainted with the culture of England and English-speaking countries, with the nature of the people, his mentality. The nature of the people and the peculiarities of his language affect each other. Ukrainian people are friendly, hard-working, patient, hospitable, ready to help each other, conscientious, patriotic, and funny. The Englishmen are rational, hardworking, freedom-loving, independent, restrained. The "Western soul" is much more rational, organized, organized by the mind of civilization than the Ukrainian soul, in which the irrational, unorganized and disorderly element always remains.

It is very motivating to study English in situations in which students can see something different or common in the characters of English and Ukrainian. For example, expressing gratitude for a welcoming reception in English sounds more often than in Ukrainian. But the English do not express thanks to the involvement of the promoters with the hosts. Analyzing the meaning of proverbs and sayings in the Ukrainian and English languages, we immediately see many common features in the philosophical understanding of human life, in moral benchmarks and in the assessments of such different peoples.

Let's take a closer look at the proverbs, with such important topics as family, friendship and good-neighborly relations and more. English proverbs show individualism, a tendency to inviolate privacy, "Love your neighbor, but because of the high tines" (Love your neighbor, yet pull not down your fence); "When the fence is between friends, then friendship can be eternal" (A hedge between keeps friendship green); "Let the whole world flutter, but let me rest in my court" (Let the world wag and take mine in ease in mine inn). At the same time, the British attach great importance to the power of human unity, friendship, with the consent: "Together we will stand, and in a different way we will die" (United friend, in a misfortune, is a real friend) (A friend in need is a friend really). There is a lot of similarity about the value of friendship in the Ukrainian language: "There is no one in the world above the friend of the old man", "How will it be desperate - know a friend", "A man without friends - a tree without roots", "A man without a friend - that food without salt".

A comparative analysis of the proverbs of these two nations makes it possible to get a clearer picture of the features of their national character and mentality. Here are some more common proverbs and sayings that are designed to help the teacher to perform tasks related to improving the pronunciation of sounds and speech apparatus to organize the work of junior students.

*Friends and friendship*

A friend in need is a friend indeed.

(В лиху годину пізнаєш вірну людину.)

Live and learn. (Вік живи — вік учись.)

*Household Chores:*

All is well that ends well.

(Гарний кінець — доброї справи вінець.)

Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today.

(Сьогоднішня робота на завтра не відкладається.)

*Englishman's Home:*

East or West home is best.

(В гостях добре, а дома краще.)

There is no place like home.

(Краще рідної землі немає.)

*Around the city:*

Rome was not built in a day.

(Не відразу Київ будувався.)

As clear as a day.

(Ясно як день.)

*At Your Service:*

Everything is good in its season.

(Кожному овочу свій час.)

An apple a day keeps a doctor away.

(Хто яблуко щодня з'їдає, того лікар минає.)

*Look Back:*

As you sow, so shall you reap.

(Що посієш — то пожнеш.)

Better late than never.



(Краще пізно, ніж ніколи.)  
*Learn About The Choose an author as you choose a friend.*  
World Around: (Обирай письменника, як друга.)  
Tastes differ.  
(Про смаки не сперечаються) [1].

Only when students understand the meaning of words and can read them separately, you can try to foster their speedy and quality execution. This task is rather complicated for the youngest students. Thus it is not surprising that perhaps not every child will cope with it perfectly.

V.O. Sukhomlynsky gave a very important reasoning for attracting children to the spiritual wisdom of the people. At Pavlyshivska school, students studied and recorded proverbs, as well as independently created them, looking at real life situations. According to V. Sukhomlynsky, this work "contributed to the expansion of their outlook and the creation of practical skills in research work" [5].

Analyzing foreign language features, in today's conditions it is advisable to extend the scope of its educational impact on the student, fully use the potential of foreign language so that it is actively promoted intercultural dialogue in various fields of human activity, mutual understanding of peoples, countries, social systems, generalization of achievements of national cultures in the development of human culture and the enrichment of spiritual values created by different nations and humanity as a whole.

Hopefully, such material as small forms of folklore serve as an encouraging factor in terms of solving the problem of providing conditions for multicultural education, mutual progressive ideas of ethnic parenting, human adaptation to foreign language cultural environment tolerant attitude to the creative heritage of different nations through the lens of national identity, language, traditions and folklore. We believe noteworthy is the experience in studying and popularizing Ukrainian folk art in the context of teaching English, beginning with the school first stage, and integrated lessons of English language and reading (the native language).

Folk music is eventually found in every family and community of a nation. Songs that are familiar like "Happy Birthday to You," holiday songs, religious songs and game songs are often passed from person to person rather than being taught formally. Some folk songs are taught at schools, and some songs that begin as popular songs become folk songs over time. Folk songs are most easily identified by their variations, such as changes in words or slight changes in melody. Sometimes new verses are added; sometimes older verses are deleted. The ways that folk songs are transmitted, or passed down, often resembles "The Telephone Game," where the original content changes as it gets passed from one person to the next. Popular songs are usually recorded and sold commercially; the recording fixes the lyrics, the melody, and the verses. More formal songs are often learned at school, like the national anthem of Ukraine, but even formal songs may be sung in a variety of places.

Discovering Folk Arts in Everyday Life. Folk arts are a part of everyone's life, even if we don't think about them as arts. Have you ever taken your students to a festival, made them tell a scary story, celebrated a holiday by making a special dish, worn a costume, done a special dance, decorated the classroom or even school for a holiday, or sung a folk song? If the answer is "yes, then you have participated in making, using, or enjoying folk arts. This work provided at the English lessons will help teachers and students discover folk arts together with their families, at their homes, through stories, games, and familiar objects, and even with food. Each lesson can be taught alone or linked together as a unit in which folk culture and folk arts through small forms folklore will provide a basis for teaching local and world culture.

Indisputably, folklore with its small forms is a great source of information on any culture but it may also be a source of authentic language materials in the ESL class. Collie and Slater [6] enumerate four crucial reasons for incorporating literature, including folk tales, into English lessons. First and foremost, it consists of written material that deals with fundamental human issues and in most cases its relevance moves with the passing time. Secondly, for those language learners who will never be able to visit the country where English is spoken, folk tales are a perfect way to broaden their understanding of the way of life there. Therefore, the reader has an opportunity to observe their emotions, customs, beliefs, acts or environment which altogether expand one's insight into the structure of a real society. When it comes to the language used in folk texts it has to be stated that, in most cases, it is dissimilar to the way people speak nowadays. Yet, the teacher can freely use graded readers, which are available online, starting from primary and elementary level with appropriate language difficulty. Individual lexical or syntactical items are more memorable only in well-chosen and appropriate context. Additionally, using literature fosters the personal involvement in readers as they imaginatively get involved in the story and shift the focus of attention beyond the mechanical aspects of the foreign language system like they usually do when working with the regular book. Therefore, such activities can be used for enhancing students' foreign language competence and language skills.

#### **CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

There are many strong reasons for enhancing students' foreign language competence in primary school shaped by the objectives, values, beliefs, skills, etc., at the English lessons. First and foremost the study of students' progress of English through small forms of folklore brings into focus not only their success but also development of their personal taste and beauty. Connected with the question of taste is one of cultural privileging. A study of local and world culture introduces students to a body of aesthetically challenging works that are well known but every new time they deal with it they discover something new drilling own English language abilities.



At English classes, there is an excellent opportunity to bring junior students to the riches and boundless colors of this type of folk wisdom that we use in our work. This way of inquiry will allow younger students to capture the meaning, develop visual memory. Studying Ukrainian and English small forms of folklore, their translations creates great conditions for the development of interesting, accessible types of work that involve the child to active activities, affect the formation of moral and ethical values.

According to the material mentioned above, students get better acquainted with variety of customs, traditions and beliefs of the multicultural world through small forms of folklore. Hopefully, such material serves as an effective factor in terms of solving the problem of providing conditions for multicultural education, mutual progressive ideas, students adaptation to foreign language cultural environment, tolerant attitude to the creative heritage of different nations through the lens of national identity, language, traditions and folklore. This problem is relevant and requires deeper development of the content and forms of assimilation of small forms of folklore in the educational process of the elementary classes.

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