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CHILDREN'S GENRE AND EDUCATIONAL ISSUES IN THE FOLKLORE HERITAGE OF THE KAZAKH PEOPLE

Annotation. This article examines the children's genre in the folklore heritage of the Kazakh people and its educational significance in the formation of moral, intellectual, and cultural values. Kazakh children's folklore-including lullabies, counting rhymes, riddles, tongue twisters, fairy tales, and didactic songs-served as an essential traditional mechanism for upbringing and socialization in nomadic society. These oral works transmitted ethical norms, practical knowledge, worldview, and aesthetic taste from generation to generation. The study analyzes the pedagogical functions of children's folklore, its role in developing memory, speech, thinking, and imagination, and its importance in shaping respect for elders, love for the homeland, diligence, and humanity. The article also considers how children's folklore reflected everyday life, nature, and social relations of the steppe civilization, acting as an informal educational system long before the emergence of formal schooling. Furthermore, it highlights the relevance of integrating folklore materials into modern educational practice to preserve national identity and cultural continuity.

Keywords: Kazakh folklore, children's genre, upbringing, oral tradition, folk pedagogy, moral education, cultural heritage, didactic function.

Introduction

The study of children's folklore constitutes an important field within ethnography, pedagogy, and cultural history, as it reflects the traditional mechanisms through which societies transmitted knowledge, values, and behavioral norms to younger generations. In the context of Kazakh national heritage, children's folklore represents a unique and rich layer of oral tradition that functioned for centuries as an informal yet highly effective educational system. Long before the emergence of formal schooling, the Kazakh people relied on oral genres specifically addressed to children to nurture moral qualities, intellectual abilities, and social awareness. Kazakh children's folklore includes lullabies, counting rhymes, riddles, tongue twisters, fairy tales, game songs, and didactic verses. These genres were not merely entertainment but served clear pedagogical purposes. Through them, children learned their native language, developed memory and thinking skills, absorbed ethical standards, and became acquainted with the surrounding natural and social environment of the steppe. The upbringing of children in nomadic society was inseparable from oral tradition, where every genre carried educational content adapted to the child's age and perception. The development of children's folklore can be conditionally divided into several functional stages corresponding to a child's growth. The first stage is associated with lullabies and soothing songs performed in infancy, aimed at emotional comfort and the formation of early perception.

The second stage involves counting rhymes, tongue twisters, and riddles, which contributed to the development of speech, logic, and memory. The third stage includes fairy tales, legends, and instructive stories that shaped worldview, moral consciousness, and respect for elders, homeland, and communal values. In traditional Kazakh society, elders, parents, and storytellers played a central role in preserving and transmitting these genres. Children's folklore reflected everyday life, labor traditions, relationships with nature, and social norms, thereby preparing the child for adult life within the community. It acted as a means of socialization, cultural continuity, and preservation of national identity [1, p, 67]. Thus, the children's genre in Kazakh folklore should be considered not only as a cultural phenomenon but also as a historically formed pedagogical system. Its study allows us to better understand the educational worldview of the Kazakh people and reveals the enduring relevance of folk pedagogy in contemporary educational practice.

Materials and Methods

This study employs historical-comparative, structural-functional, and ethnopedagogical approaches to examine the children's genre and its educational significance within the folklore heritage of the Kazakh people. The research is based on the analysis of oral folklore texts, ethnographic records, and folklore collections published in the 19th–20th centuries, as well as contemporary scholarly interpretations in the fields of folklore studies, pedagogy, and cultural history. The primary sources include collections of Kazakh folklore recorded by prominent ethnographers and folklorists such as Shokan Valikhanov, Grigory Potanin, Vasily Radlov and Alexander Divaev, whose works preserve numerous examples of children's folklore genres, including lullabies, riddles, counting rhymes, fairy tales, and didactic songs. These materials provide valuable evidence of the pedagogical content embedded in oral tradition and its role in the upbringing of children in nomadic society. In addition, the study draws upon secondary literature in folklore studies and ethnopedagogy that interprets children's folklore as a traditional educational system. Scholarly works on Kazakh oral tradition, folk pedagogy, and cultural anthropology were used to contextualize the educational functions of children's genres within the broader social and cultural environment of the steppe. Methodologically, the research integrates historical-genetic analysis to trace the origin and development of children's genres, structural-functional analysis to identify their pedagogical roles, and comparative analysis to relate Kazakh children's folklore to similar traditions among other Turkic and nomadic peoples. Textual analysis of folklore samples was conducted to reveal recurring motifs, moral themes, linguistic features, and cognitive elements aimed at the child's development. By synthesizing folklore texts with ethnographic and pedagogical interpretations, the study elucidates how children's genres functioned as an informal yet systematic means of education, socialization, and transmission of cultural values across generations in Kazakh society.

Research Results

Although the issue of studying the folklore heritage of the Kazakh people and considering it on the basis of national values is being considered by literary critics and linguists, no full-fledged ethnographic studies have been conducted on its place and significance in the history of the nation. Only in the scientific heritage of some ethnographers, the issue of considering folklore as oral history and its significance is mentioned in the works of Alkey Margulan, Marat Mukanov, Akseleu Seidimbekov, Abdesh Toleubayev, and Zhambyl Artykbayev. In recent years, this issue has also been considered by historians, and the famous historian Mambet Koygeldiev has established a scientific center called "Told History" within the Kazakh Pedagogical University named after Abai and is conducting

research in this area. At the same time, the famous ethnographer and scientist Zhambyl Omarovich Artykbayev is also writing about oral history and is doing significant work in this area. From our side, considering folklore as an ethnographic source, we consider that it is the cream of the nation's memory and basic spiritual culture, and the importance of using it in the upbringing of the younger generation in the modern era of globalization. First, before coming to this issue, we cannot fail to dwell on the research of famous folklore scholars. In the multi-volume works of the famous historian and ethnographer Zeynolla Sanik, who collected the rich heritage of the Kazakh people in China, he writes down his thoughts on Kazakh ethnography and folklore [1, p. 64]. "Chinese scholars call ethnography "folklore", and folklore "folk literature", and they say that textbooks were written on this basis. "Folklore" here is close to the word "science of folk customs and consciousness". And "folk literature" is, in our words, the word "science of oral literature" or "science of folk literature". At first, they studied this science without any pretensions, based on the name "folklore" of one of the founders of the English Folklore Society, the scientist Sakhon, in 1846. Under his influence, textbooks called "folkloristics" were published in China in the Uyghur and Kazakh languages. In his work "General Review of Ethnography" published in Beijing in 1987, the famous Chinese folklorist scientist Tau Lifan showed that folklore and ethnography are twin branches of the same tree, both are sister sciences, both complement and support each other. This is what Zeynolla Sanik says about the opinion of this Chinese scientist about folklore and ethnography.

Although the first examples of the rich heritage of Kazakh folklore began to appear on manuscript pages in ancient times, its systematic collection and study began in the second half of the 19th century. The development of this process is directly related to the work of researchers after the subjugation of the Kazakh steppe to Russia. Among the first researchers of Kazakh folklore, children's folklore was not given much attention in their early studies; only genres such as riddles, lullabies, mock poems, and riddles were recorded as part of the folk heritage. Among the first researchers, V.V. Radlov, in the third volume of his work entitled "Models of Folk Literature of Turkic Tribes...", encountered the mock poem model, but did not consider it separately [2].

It can be said that the "Kazakh Chrestomathy" published in 1897 by Ybray Altynsarin, considered the father of Kazakh children's literature, was one of the first works that paid attention to the creativity and spiritual world of Kazakh children. In this work, wonderful examples of the Kazakh people's oral literature are presented in the form of excerpts adapted for children. [2, p. 185]. The textbook "Kiragat" by M. Dulatov, who wrote many textbooks for Kazakh children, contains a wide range of examples of folklore. In the book "Attracting Children", published in 1926, a comprehensive introduction was made to the model of folk poetry for children. This work collected many examples of finger games, rhymes and riddles, lullabies, devotional poems, riddles and riddles. "El utiriqi" by the classic of Kazakh literature Ilyas Zhansugurov can be considered the first outstanding work of Kazakh children's folklore. At the same time, the book "Auyldagi zhasrat, zhas ulandar ushin oyin" published in Semey in 1928 contains a collection of children's poems and games. In recent years, a number of studies have been conducted by domestic literary scholars regarding the internal system of folklore and its theory. In their 2-volume work "The Continuity of Kazakh Folklore and Tradition" by A.A. Abilov and R. Salmanov, several classifications are proposed in the development of the division of folk oral literature into types, based on the consideration of the issue of Kazakh folklore and tradition in the unity of word and music [3, p. 85].

Among them, the fourth chapter separately considers “poems for children”. a) lullabies, b) introduction poems, b) julekhana poems, c) sundet toy poems, d) poems about childhood, dedicated to children, poems with a meaning of wishes, etc. In addition, in this fourth part, “Poems for children to recite” includes, a) counting, b) poems during play, b) poems about nature, c) lie poems, d) poems about life, work, livestock, g) riddles, riddles, e) poems about art, education, school life, teachers, f) poems about the homeland, native land, country, parents, etc. In the second volume of this work, proverbs, riddles, riddles for children are analyzed and divided into five categories. 1) proverbs, 2) sayings, 3) proverbs, 4) riddles, 5) riddles. In addition, the fairy tales themselves are divided into four directions according to their subject: fairy tales, realistic fairy tales, fairy tales about animals and satirical fairy tales. Among the researchers who have conducted extensive work on children's folklore in general and included it in the higher education curriculum, we can mention the textbook "Folklore image, knowledge and art" by G.S. Saginadin. In the chapter of this work entitled "Children's folklore and the image of the fox", it is said that "Children's folklore is a precious heritage of the people accumulated over the centuries, which reveals the psychology of children, artistic taste, and creative possibilities." In the first quarter of the 19th century, in the work of Akhmet Baitursynov "The Revealer of Literature", such terms as "false poem", "mystery", "misleading", "trick", "jarapazan", "lullaby" entered the scientific circulation for the first time and were clarified in terms of meaning. It is very important that, speaking of fairy tales, he wrote that "where there is no children's literature, fairy tales are a very useful thing for educating the child's spiritual imagination, they teach the child to dream and speak." It is clear that the scientist, who deeply felt and understood the inner nature of folk literature, paid great attention to the small genres of folklore. For example, he says that the collection of works called "Bash Katsur" has not yet been paid attention to. "Bash Katsur" is a riddle that makes you think, but when there is no solution, it makes you worry. Not knowing that there is no solution, a person's head is spinning, thinking that he will find the riddle. That is why it is called a puzzle and has a great positive effect on the development of the child's mind [4, p. 42]. One of the most prominent researchers in the science of Kazakh folklore, Khalel Dosmukhameduly, is particularly noteworthy in his work "Kazakh folk literature". The scientist's work "The study of folk children's literature sheds a lot of light on the development of the child's nature and language, which Kazakh teachers should pay special attention to. [6, p. 30].

The life of the Kazakh people, from the moment they are born, to adulthood, and even to the end of their lives, is full of poetry. As our great poet Abai Kunanbayev sang about it, “At birth, poetry opens the door to the world, and your body enters the depths of the earth with poetry…”, so the whole life of our people is woven with poetry, consisting of educational poems and oral literature in various genres depending on the age of the person. Among scientists, especially literary researchers, there are different opinions on the question of what works can be included in the scope of the term “children's folklore”. While some scientists believe that children's folklore should include only works that children themselves tell and perform, and that live only among children (V.S. Vinogradov), a number of researchers suggest that children's folklore should include all works directly related to raising children, and therefore, it should also include works that adults tell for children (O.I. Kapitsa). [7, p. 31] Some of the rich heritage that children memorize and become their spiritual heritage is their own creativity, but the vast majority are works that have been transferred from adult creativity, boiled in the cauldron of children's taste, and have undergone a thorough "processing". Sometimes there are works that coexist in both environments. It is possible to

observe that one after another the general folklore genre is gradually moving from the children's repertoire. For example, the ordinary fairy tale. In terms of origin, this is one of the most complex and basic genres of adult folklore that has been around for a long time. But it has become a genre that has become a favorite of children. In today's developed and mature society, adults are reflected in the fairy tale genre in the form of watching and admiring children's actions. And in the imagination of children, they believe with all their heart, immerse themselves in it, and feel as if they are immersed in that world. They find in the heritage of that ancient era a close correspondence to their own world. That is, the thinking system of a child in many cases coincides with the thinking system of humanity at that time [8, p. 65]. The essence of this idea can be seen in the works of the famous scientist, ethnographer D. Frezer and researchers such as E. Meletinsky, V. Gusev, A. Vygotsky. The famous scientist Akhmet Baitursynuly also says that due to the genre of fairy tales, it is necessary to pay attention to the similarity of the nature of the child and the thinking system of people in fairy tales. In early societies, mankind, like children, did not distinguish between living and inanimate things, but understood that they lived the same. They were like children who saw their dolls and other toys as living things. Since there was no place to separate from nature, man himself lived alongside nature, in a state of continuity, continuity, and succession with nature - he also explains the reason why folklore works are so close to the soul of children. [9, p. 410]. Here, from this point of view, there are enough issues to be considered by modern historical sciences, which consider children's creativity or children's ethnography. And trying to delimit it from the heritage of adults at the present stage is a conditional issue. This conditionality arises in the interests of any scientific research, when it comes to reality. And from a natural point of view, it can be said that it is an interconnected world. Today, the development of genres of Kazakh folklore related to child education from an ethnographic perspective, the revival of it in the upbringing of the generation is an urgent issue. Of course, we need to create new directions in a modern way, not to convey it to modern children in the same form, but to create new ones that will be absorbed into their minds through various digital achievements, artificial intelligence tools, depending on the thinking ability of modern children [10, p. 54]. To do this, we must first focus on the level of research and achievements in this field. The upbringing of the generation is a very important topic that is used not only by teachers or psychologists, but also by all branches of science.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the children’s genre in the folklore heritage of the Kazakh people represents a complex cultural and pedagogical phenomenon that for centuries functioned as an effective system of upbringing and education in nomadic society. Long before the appearance of formal schools, Kazakh children were introduced to moral values, social norms, practical knowledge, and aesthetic perception through lullabies, riddles, counting rhymes, tongue twisters, fairy tales, and didactic songs transmitted orally from generation to generation. These folklore genres were not merely forms of entertainment but served as purposeful educational tools. Through them, children developed speech, memory, logical thinking, imagination, and emotional sensitivity. At the same time, they absorbed respect for elders, love for the homeland, diligence, honesty, and humanity-core values that defined the ethical foundation of Kazakh society. Children’s folklore reflected the surrounding natural environment, everyday life, labor traditions, and social relations of the steppe, preparing the child for conscious participation in community life. The preservation and transmission of these genres by parents, elders, and storytellers ensured cultural continuity and the stability of national identity. In this sense, children’s folklore acted as an informal but systematic

institution of folk pedagogy, shaping the worldview and character of younger generations in accordance with traditional values [11, p. 45]. Today, the study of children's folklore acquires renewed relevance. Integrating its pedagogical potential into modern educational practice can contribute to strengthening cultural awareness, moral education, and the preservation of national heritage. Therefore, the children's genre in Kazakh folklore should be regarded not only as a valuable element of intangible cultural heritage but also as a historically formed educational system that continues to hold significance for contemporary society.

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ҚАЗАҚ ХАЛҚЫНЫҢ ФОЛЬКЛОРЛЫҚ МҰРАСЫНДАҒЫ БАЛАЛАР ЖАНРЫ ЖӘНЕ ТӘРБИЕ МӘСЕЛЕСІ

Аңдатпа. Бұл мақала қазақ халқының фольклорлық мұрасындағы балалар жанрын және оның адамгершілік, зияткерлік әрі мәдени құндылықтарды қалыптастырудағы тәрбиелік маңызын қарастырады. Қазақ балалар фольклоры — бесік жыры, санамақтар, жұмбақтар, жаңылтпаштар, ертегілер мен өсиет өлеңдер — көшпелі қоғамда тәрбие мен әлеуметтенудің дәстүрлі әрі маңызды тетігі қызметін атқарды. Бұл ауызша туындылар ұрпақтан ұрпаққа этикалық нормаларды, өмірлік тәжірибені, дүниетанымды және эстетикалық талғамды жеткізіп отырды. Зерттеуде балалар фольклорының педагогикалық қызметі, оның есте сақтау, сөйлеу, ойлау және қиял қабілеттерін дамытудағы рөлі, сондай-ақ үлкенге құрмет, отансүйгіштік, еңбекқорлық пен адамгершілік қасиеттерді қалыптастырудағы маңызы талданады. Сонымен қатар, мақалада балалар фольклорының дала өркениетінің күнделікті тұрмысын, табиғатын және әлеуметтік қатынастарын бейнелей отырып, ресми мектеп жүйесі қалыптаспай тұрып-ақ бейресми білім беру жүйесі ретінде қызмет атқарғаны қарастырылады. Бұдан бөлек, ұлттық бірегейлік пен мәдени сабақтастықты сақтау мақсатында фольклорлық материалдарды қазіргі білім беру үдерісіне енгізудің өзектілігі көрсетіледі.

Кілт сөздер: қазақ фольклоры, балалар жанры, тәрбие, ауызша дәстүр, халық педагогикасы, адамгершілік тәрбиесі, мәдени мұра, дидактикалық қызмет.

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ДЕТСКИЙ ЖАНР И ВОСПИТАТЕЛЬНЫЕ ПРОБЛЕМЫ В ФОЛЬКЛОРНОМ НАСЛЕДИИ КАЗАХСКОГО НАРОДА

Аннотация. В данной статье рассматривается детский жанр в фольклорном наследии казахского народа и его воспитательное значение в формировании нравственных, интеллектуальных и культурных ценностей. Казахский детский фольклор — колыбельные песни, считалки, загадки, скороговорки, сказки и поучительные стихи — выполнял важную традиционную функцию воспитания и социализации в условиях кочевого общества. Эти устные произведения передавали из поколения в поколение этические нормы, жизненный опыт, мировоззрение и эстетический вкус. В исследовании анализируются педагогические функции детского фольклора, его роль в развитии памяти, речи, мышления и воображения, а также его значение в формировании уважения к старшим, любви к родине, трудолюбия и гуманности. В статье также рассматривается, как детский фольклор отражал повседневную жизнь, природу и социальные отношения степной цивилизации, выступая неформальной системой образования задолго до появления школьного обучения. Кроме того, подчеркивается актуальность использования фольклорных материалов в современной образовательной практике с целью сохранения национальной идентичности и культурной преемственности.

Ключевые слова: казахский фольклор, детский жанр, воспитание, устная традиция, народная педагогика, нравственное воспитание, культурное наследие, дидактическая функция.