

LINGUODIDACTIC POTENTIAL OF USING SONGS BASED ON UZBEK CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE IN DEVELOPING ENGLISH PHONETIC SKILLS

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Abstract. This paper puts forward the idea of using forms of Uzbek children's folklore in teaching English pronunciation to primary school pupils. The rhythmic features of lullabies, counting rhymes, tongue twisters and game songs are compared with the difficult sounds of English, and it is shown which sound each genre is suited to.

Keywords: phonetic skill, children's folklore, song, primary school, English language, rhythm.

Almost all the songs in primary school textbooks come from English children's folklore. Twinkle twinkle, Old MacDonald, Head and shoulders. The songs are good, and children like them too. But there is one thing. An Uzbek child hears this song for the first time. The melody is unfamiliar, the rhythm is unfamiliar, the words are unfamiliar. The child has to learn three things at once, and the sound ends up in the very last place among them. By the end of the lesson the child knows the melody, says the words somehow, but still pronounces three as [sri].

I looked at it from another side. What does a child know from kindergarten? Lullabies, counting rhymes, tongue twisters, songs sung during games. Their melody and rhythm are in the child's ear. What if this familiar form were taken to teach an English sound? The melody is familiar, the rhythm is familiar, so the child learns only one new thing, the sound.

Let me make one thing clear right away. This is not about translating Uzbek songs into English. In translation the rhythm is broken, and the meaning often becomes incomprehensible to the child as well. It is about taking the form of a folklore genre, that is, its rhythm, its pattern of repetition and its melody, and writing for it a new text in English aimed at one specific sound.

Much has been written about the benefit of songs for pronunciation. T. Murphey said that a song "sticks in the ear" and gives rise to inner repetition [1]. C. Graham, in turn, said that a melody is not necessary and that rhythm alone is enough, and on this basis created the jazz chants method [2]. In the context of Russian schools, L.R. Gaynutdinova developed a methodology for forming phonetic skills through songs and tested it experimentally [3]. But in all of these works the songs are taken from English folklore. In none of them is the learner's own musical experience taken into account. The same is true of the local works I have seen.

There are several genres in Uzbek children's folklore [4]. From these I took the four most familiar for primary school and compared their rhythmic features with the English sounds that are difficult for an Uzbek child. The result is in the table.

Table. Folklore genres and the phonetic tasks suited to them

Genre	Rhythmic feature	Which sound it suits

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Genre	Rhythmic feature	Which sound it suits
Lullaby	Slow, drawn-out, much repetition	Long vowels: /i:/ /u:/ /ɑ:/, the ship–sheep distinction
Counting rhyme	Fast, strongly stressed, short lines	Stress and rhythm, unstressed /ə/, word-final consonants
Tongue twister	One sound is repeated many times	Individual difficult consonants: /θ/ /ð/ /w/ /ŋ/
Game song	With movement, the refrain is repeated	Sound combinations, linked pronunciation

For example, for the /θ/ sound the tongue-twister form is the most suitable. In Uzbek tongue twisters one sound is deliberately repeated many times, and a similar text can be written in English: three thin thieves, think, thank, thirteen. The rhythm is that of an Uzbek tongue twister, the sound is that of English. For long and short vowels, the lullaby is convenient, because drawing a sound out is natural in it.

There is also an objection, and I will not hide it. English is a stress-based language, while Uzbek is syllable-based. If English words are set to an Uzbek melody, will the English rhythm not be broken? In my opinion, strongly stressed genres such as the counting rhyme help to overcome precisely this difference, because in them too the stressed syllable stands out clearly. With the lullaby, however, one has to be careful; it is only for individual sounds. But this is my assumption, and it needs to be tested in the classroom.

One more aspect. While learning English, the child does not move away from their own folklore; on the contrary, they see it anew in a new language. Besides being a methodological matter, this is also important from the point of view of preserving national values.

For now this is a theoretical idea. The next step is to write 3–4 texts in English for each genre, to try them out for one quarter in the 2nd and 3rd grades that I teach myself, and to compare the result with ordinary English songs. Only after that will it become clear which method teaches the sound faster.

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