

# Children's folklore as a basis for teaching reading and text analysis

## El folclore infantil como base de la enseñanza de la lectura y el análisis del texto

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#### ABSTRACT:

The article focuses on the appropriateness of usage children's and fairy-tale folklore texts as educational material in the process of forming reader's competences. The peculiarities of the practical usage of folk art creations at the literary reading lessons are analysed in terms of the experimental study. There is suggested a theory and methodology of learning activity organization in elementary school.

**Keywords:** children's folklore, methods of working with texts, reading competence, modern technologies.

#### RESUMEN:

El artículo se centra en la conveniencia de referirse a los textos del folclore infantil y de cuentos de hadas como material didáctico en el proceso de formación de competencias de lectura. Se analizan las características de la aplicación práctica de las obras de arte popular en las lecciones de lectura literaria durante el estudio experimental; se sugiere la teoría y la metodología de la organización de actividades de aprendizaje en las clases secundarias.

**Palabras clave:** folclore infantil, metodología del trabajo con el texto, competencia de lectura, tecnologías modernas

## 1. Introduction

As educational material folklore has a long tradition in primary education in Russia. It is successfully used in a modern literary reading teaching and plays an important role in the educational and reading activity of young learners, as it has a close relation to children literature (Boykina & Vinogradskaya, 2015; Troitskaya, 2016).

The expediency of using folklore by young learners as an integral part of national culture is stated in the Federal State Educational Standard: at the literary reading lessons there should be carried out spiritual and moral education of students, providing the acceptance of moral standards and national values by learners. Literary reading contributes to the formation of world views, culture and ethical ideas, the concept of morality. The concept of spiritual and

moral development and education of Russia citizen personality also affirms the need for students together with their teachers and parents to turn to the folklore of the peoples of Russia. (The concept of spiritual and moral development and education of Russian citizen personality, 2018).

It seems relevant to form teachers' competence in the theory and practice of teaching folklore at literary reading lessons, in developing skills of methodical organization of lessons on the children's folklore texts and folk tales study, which are the most appropriate for the characteristics of the psychological and intellectual development of younger students (Grakhova & Kaguy, 2018). Having a number of modern educational and methodical complexes for literary reading, which are considered to be innovative, it's expedient for the teacher to be aware of textbooks line content (calendar and thematic planning of lessons, guidelines for them, etc.) included into complexes.

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## **2. Methodology**

This article reveals methodical basis defining reading peculiarities, primary analysis and Russian children's folklore interpretations by younger learners.

The authors used methods of theoretical research – modern methods of group work, educational activities of primary school class modeling, interdisciplinary analysis of didactic, methodological, philological technologies; empirical methods – methodical description, statistical processing of research results and hermeneutic methods of their interpretation.

The problem of modern primary school is the episodic nature of the work on folk works and their figurative aspect. In some cases, the lessons of fairy tales literary reading and the study of children's folklore are limited to certain classes, which does not allow younger learners to make serious generalizations by genre. In any case, the world of images, its components and interrelations should remain the focus of attention in the study of folk verbal art.

Methodical solutions of the teacher from this field should be based on prior teaching experience, and "certain statements of the folklore defining the nature of the genre" (Nikitchenkov, 20116). Let us present how folklore literary reading process in primary school can be organized.

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## **3. Results/Discussion**

The approximate program of primary General education heads primary school teachers to the fact that students at the lessons of literary reading will have to acquire the historical and cultural heritage of Russia and universal values for ethical and emotional development (An approximate basic). The programs provide obligatory acquaintance with the works of folklore for the younger learners. Students have to learn to perceive and evaluate their content and form, to know the folklore of their motherland, the artistic creations of the people.

Preserving the mentality of the people, its history and culture, bringing up a child's love for the Motherland oral folk art is presented in various genre forms. Depending on the size of the work traditionally they are:

- 1) large forms: fairy-tales, legends, epics, historical songs, ballads;
- 2) small forms: proverbs, sayings, riddles, tongue twisters, rhymes, teasers, nursery rhymes, etc.

Along with that, there's a concept of children's folklore presenting world view and life of children. It mainly includes texts of small forms. In general, each genre contains a clear functional purpose and focused on certain patterns of age development of children.

Children's folklore has a modern development, continuing in school folklore.

According to Methodist Stefanenko in modern teacher's understanding literary reading lesson "is a developing and educating lesson" (Sosnovskaya, 2004). The personality of the younger learner gets all-round development on it (literary, intellectual, moral, emotional). According to that, reading lessons in modern teaching activities are focused on the development of children's ability to fully perceive literary texts in their artistic and aesthetic

integrity, and on the development of younger learners' educational activities.

In order to successfully implement such goals, the teacher has the opportunity to organize various activities in the classroom, such as: reading, creative, communicative, usage of various modern pedagogical technologies.

Note that the process of text analysis in primary school is a kind of activity in which personal qualities of both teacher and student are objectified. The teacher shouldn't take the position of the all-knowing "master", offering his knowledge to the student, but the position of a co-author of a single act of interpretation. In the process of analyzing the folk work, the teacher and students "connect" only in two aspects – when they take as a basis a unified text and a theoretical and methodological background. Along with that both the teacher and the student have to accept the following guidelines:

- 1) The student has to learn the theoretical concepts and master the primary skills of text analysis;
- 2) in the process of work analysis to exclude referring to the textbook or "someone else's opinion";
- 3) the student must realize that "he is not only preparing a task", but he fulfills himself as an individual person, that he can bring something new to the understanding of a seemingly well-known work. In this case, the teacher's aim is to help the student to realize himself as a Creator, a novice literary critic.

It is necessary to take into account the fact that the lessons of literary reading cease to be a welcoming school subject for the student. Their attitude to the folk fairy-tale changed to the negative side. Folk fairy-tale for centuries carried the spiritual experience of the people, its ideals, dreams and expectations, ideas about man and nature, truth and honesty (Merkur'eva, 2012). Such an attitude to the educational material in general, and to fairy tales in particular, may be connected with its development in the preschool period. Another factor is that in modern society there is a decline in children's folklore, most likely, there is a transformation of children's culture as a whole (Troitskaya, 2016). The decline might be connected with the disappearance of game genres from children's lives, which may be explained by several reasons: decreasing of yard space in cities, tendency for teaching children in the creativity centres, the development of the Internet and video games, which distances the child further from the classic children's communities. A solution for this problem might be seen in the usage of new work forms (meaningful, pedagogical, methodical) when learning folklore at the literary reading lessons.

Exactly new work forms are presented in modern educational and methodical complexes, which are included in the Federal list of the textbooks recommended for execution of school educational programs (Order of March 31, 2014). These are textbooks of some educational and methodical complexes: "School of Russia", "RHYTHM", "Perspective", "Primary school of the XXI century", Elkonin's System – Davydov's "Prospective elementary school", etc.

The main contradiction of school practice is that, on the one hand, these educational and methodical complexes are in demand, and, on the other, it is difficult for the teacher to predict the success of any of them in the learning process.

We present the results of the research, which was aimed at the problem solving that is logically emanating from the above contradiction and received the following formulation: will the use of educational and methodical complex "School of Russia" at the literary reading lessons in the study of children's folklore and folk tales be successful?

In our work, we used complex "Literary reading. 2 grade" by Klimanova and others (EMC "School of Russia"), which includes: textbook (in 2 parts), workbook, methodical guidelines, work programs. 1-4 grades, the notebook of educational achievements, summer reading.

The textbook "Literary reading" for the second grade (Klimanova, Goretsky & Golovanova, 2015) provides work with a large number of folklore works: proverbs and sayings, Russian folk songs, lullaby songs, nursery rhyme, counting rhymes and fables, riddles, Russian folk fairy-tales. In total, 110 works of oral folk art are studied in the second grade, 66% of them are proverbs and sayings reflecting various moral values (labor, friendship, mutual

assistance, harmony, respect for elders, etc.), 19% of them are riddles, 15% are works of other folklore genres.

According to Stefanenko, this amount of material shows a fairly complete representation of the material for the spiritual and moral development and education of the Russian citizen on the example of Russian people folklore works (Sosnovskaya, 2004).

For the study "Oral folk art" section in the second grade is given 12 hours, including 11 hours of lessons and 1 hour of extra-curricular reading. The section begins with the problems formulation faced by children (what they will learn), the target guidelines are given, and the forecast of the works study results (what they will acquire). This is followed by a scientific and educational article, designed in the conversation form between the authors of the textbook with the students, introducing them to the subject of the topic. Thus, students are asked questions for reflection: How do you think what works will you meet in this section? What is folk art? (Klimanova, Goretsky & Golovanova, 2015, part 1). The younger learner becomes a conscious participant in educational activities.

Lullabies, nursery rhymes, jokes, counting rhymes and fables, proverbs and sayings, riddles, fairy tales are the subsections of interest to us. We will determine how the performance of tasks to the children's folklore texts and fairy tales, will form versatile educational actions of second-graders and will lead to the results achievement.

The study of the children's folklore genres begins with lullabies, goes to nursery rhymes and jokes, counting rhymes and fables, then – to riddles, proverbs and sayings, and finally to the biggest and the most complex work – a fairy tale. We also consistently – following the textbook – study folk works, read them and perform tasks. Along with that considering guideline offered for teacher's work by the EMC "School of Russia". Of course, the variation of tasks and exercises in the textbook (workbook), both for the class and after-school (home) work, taking into account the individual abilities of children, relationships, the presence of such qualities of younger learners as shyness, insufficient vocabulary to express knowledge and emotions, the need for movement, play, etc.

Students of the second grade work independently, in pairs, in groups. In cooperation with the teacher, classmates, in dialogues with them communicative learning activities are formed: Ask a friend what story did he like the most (Klimanova, Goretsky & Golovanova, 2015, part 1).

Different tasks are given to the genres above. They can be grouped depending on the ability type of second-graders they develop, what skills form and improve. Thus, the analytical skills of younger learners are formed and developed by including work analysis in the process, contributing to its aesthetic perception. Work review consists of the analysis and evaluation of the content, structure of the text and language features. It is carried out by performing various tasks to the text. For example, after the texts of small genres such questions are placed:

What is the fable and what is the counting rhyme? What fable and counting rhyme have in common? What is the relation between fable and fairy-tale? (Klimanova, Goretsky & Golovanova, 2015, part 1). The purpose of these questions: to define genre features of works. Pointing out the distinctive features leads to analysis which helps in generalization and synthesis.

The following tasks can be categorized as the tasks of this kind: to the fairy-tale "Cock And the Bean Seed" – retell a fairy tale by the illustrations. Title each episode (Klimanova, Goretsky & Golovanova, 2015, part 1); discuss with a friend what proverbs fit the meaning of the fairy-tale content (Klimanova, Goretsky & Golovanova, 2015, part 1); to the fairy-tale "Fear Takes Molehills For Mountains" – name the heroes of the fairy-tale. How do you imagine them, what do they have in common with each other? Justify your answer with the words from the fairy-tale (Klimanova, Goretsky & Golovanova, 2015, part 1); fairy tale "Swan-Brothers" – prepare for retelling: remember the sequence of events; divide the text into parts; determine the main idea of each part (Klimanova, Goretsky & Golovanova, 2015, part 1); or to the riddle: How do you think, can there be other answers to the riddle "A box without hinges, key or lid, yet a hundred of men inside are hid."? Split riddles by thematic

groups (Klimanova, Goretsky & Golovanova, 2015, part 1). The purpose of these tasks: to define the content, structure of works, characters of the fairy-tale; to develop the speech. Analytics, as ability and action, is also formed during work with schemes. At the end of reading folk fairy-tales, defining their types there is a task for generalization. What are the parts of fairy-tale? Examine the scheme. Is everything correct in it? (Klimanova, Goretsky & Golovanova, 2015, part 1). The purpose of these tasks: to learn the structure of the work and its symbols.

Model examination of the composition structure of the fairy-tale leads students to the conclusion that the structure of the work can be fixed in the form of a cat model. Parts of the fairy-tale plot are shown in the model. Its elements can help to compose your own fairy-tale, which promotes independent work of the student, and reinforcement of knowledge about a fairy-tale.

The analytical nature of thinking develops referring to the linguistic features of the texts. For example, questions to: lullaby song – What words are soothing? Find them in the text (Klimanova, Goretsky & Golovanova, 2015, part 1); to joke – Find and read the words in a singsong. Does the second work look like a fairy-tale? (Klimanova, Goretsky & Golovanova, 2015, part 1); to counting rhyme – Read the counting rhymes. Listen to their clear rhythm (Klimanova, Goretsky & Golovanova, 2015, part 1); to the fairy-tale "Fear Takes Molehills For Mountains" – Why did the storyteller have to use such words: tre-e-h, ple-e-h, three-three-three, plah-plah-plah? (Klimanova, Goretsky & Golovanova, 2015, part 1). Purpose: to describe the language of various genres; to develop speech, intonation.

Words associations are also given. They help the student to choose words for describing the traits of the characters, for example: How the Fox and the Blackcock greeted each other: cheerfully, friendly, kindly, pretentious, rude? (Klimanova, Goretsky & Golovanova, 2015, part 1); What is Fox like? (cunning, hospitable, greedy, stubborn, kind) (Klimanova, Goretsky & Golovanova, 2015, part 1). Purpose: to describe characters of the work; to develop speech.

A student has to make a choice comprehending proverbs and sayings that are given to the work (a fairy-tale). For example, to the fairy tale "Fear Takes Molehills For Mountains": Fear has big eyes: sees something nonexistent. Purpose: to realize the moral problem corresponding to the idea of a fairy-tale.

The following task was obligatory for the second-graders: Choose one or two proverbs and explain how you understand their meaning. In what cases (situations) can they be used? (Klimanova, Goretsky & Golovanova, 2015, part 1). The purpose of these tasks: to analyze life situations, to set oneself in similar conditions, ethical education; to form the intellectual, emotional activity of a student; the development of speech.

We've read and examined a big amount of proverbs and sayings that reflect the spiritual wealth of the people: Homeland is a mother, know how to defend it; All for one, one for all; No friend – look for him, found – take care of him (Klimanova, Goretsky & Golovanova, 2015, part 1). Purpose: spiritual and moral education of the second graders; development of figurativeness of the speech.

When studying children's folklore genres, the photos of different kinds of toys (Filimon, Dymkovo, straw toys) were viewed as types of folk crafts as an expression of Russian national culture, life and aesthetics of the Russian people (Klimanova, Goretsky & Golovanova, 2015, part 1). The purpose is aesthetic education of students, the creation of a cultural field at the literary reading classes.

This kind of work (exercises with proverbs and other native folk genres, the examination of illustrations) leads second-graders to the development of moral, cultural values of the people and the formation of civil and ethnic identity. In the process of its implementation, they make personal educational actions.

When studying folklore works students performed tasks aimed at information search. They are: reading of scientific and cognitive article; reading of schemes-models; studying of illustrations (they are given to all texts presented in the textbook); classifications of fairy-tale types (Klimanova, Goretsky & Golovanova, 2015, part 1), genres of children's folklore

(Klimanova, Goretsky & Golovanova, 2015, part 1); reading of texts or their episodes due to the tasks, problematic issues: Can we learn anything from nursery rhymes and jokes? (Klimanova, Goretsky & Golovanova, 2015, part 1). For the task: Make a story about Dymkovo toy – information research in encyclopedia dictionaries, on the Internet (Klimanova, Goretsky & Golovanova, 2015, part 1). The purpose is to find information, processing in the monologue speech of the second-grade student.

Tasks requiring information research and its understanding form and develop student's cognitive learning activities.

Students of the second grade tested their knowledge about oral folk art genres and works, as well as skills, answering questions and completing tasks in the section "Check yourself and evaluate your achievements", which ends the "Oral folk art" part: Remember the types of folklore; What are a nursery rhyme and a joke? Try to create one for your little brother and sister; Identify where is a proverb, a counting rhyme, a tongue twister, a rhyme, a lullaby from given works of oral folk art (Klimanova, Goretsky & Golovanova, 2015, part 1). The purpose is to develop the self-reflection of the student, independence in the evaluation of acquired knowledge. Goal-setting at the very beginning of studying the section on oral folk art, self – control, and evaluation of successes and failures are the components that form the regulatory actions of second-graders.

Throughout the work with the textbook studying folk works, students of the experimental class simultaneously addressed to the Workbook (Boykina & Vinogradskaya, 2015). They intensively performed exercises in it, complementing the tasks of the textbook, at the lesson, or these exercises were meant for the homework by the teacher.

For example, after reading and understanding the riddles in the textbook students were asked to perform the following tasks at home:

- 1) to find the book "Riddles" in the library;
- 2) to write down into the Workbook the riddles that they liked the most; to explain their preferences (Boykina & Vinogradskaya, 2015);
- 3) after reading a fairy-tale: to examine the illustration of the fairy-tale; to explain what it shows; to make a plan for their answer; to compare their plan with the one from the Workbook" (Boykina & Vinogradskaya, 2015).

This is what the second graders had to do in the first task: to search the information (visiting the library, reading a book), to create an explanatory monologue; in the second task: verbal drawing, making a plan and checking its correctness, self-control using the second educational manual.

Certain types of works in the Workbook gave children more independence, allowed them to search the information in a larger range of sources, for example, in books, magazines, on the Internet, scientific and dictionary literature. Tasks can be described as more game-like and more exciting than exercises in a textbook.

The lesson of extra-curricular reading based on the works of oral folk art was conducted including material of the Workbook. It was generalizing and creative. In a game-like form students composed a fable participated in a competition "Who Knows more riddles" and took part in the quiz "Guess the fairy-tale" (Boykina & Vinogradskaya, 2015).

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## 4. Conclusion

As we can see, the content of tasks and exercises presented in two educational manuals, contains a set of methodological techniques that, being developed, lead to the evolution of versatile educational actions of younger learners – personal, cognitive and communicative, as well as, of course, achieving results – personal, meta-subject and subject.

Folklore due to its artistic and aesthetic content is used as training material for the development of reading skills and primary analysis of texts in the class and in extracurricular activities. Works of oral folk art have character traits that distinguish them from works of art, such as collective authorship, variability, oral, language specificity, syncretism, respectively require a special approach to them in the process of methodical work.

When studying works of folklore, the following activities are dominating –analytical, information search, creative. The main means of learning in the primary school are tasks (among them are tasks in the form of questions) of different nature – problem, analytical, generalizing, creative, etc. When performing such tasks, students develop reading skills, develop the ability to analyze the work, to classify, to search and process the information, to carry out educational and creative activities.

Currently, folklore as a teaching material is rooted in the programs of the national primary school: some genres of oral folk art are studied at the lessons of literary reading and are widely involved in extracurricular activities. The role of folk literature in the reader's training of younger learners is determined by the significant impact on Russian literature and recommended to a child of primary school.

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