

The Significance of National Cultural Elements in English and Uzbek Folk Songs

Yusupova Gulizebo Yangibayevna ¹

¹ ISFT, teacher Uzswlu, phd researcher

Annotation:

Folk songs play a vital role in reflecting a nation's culture and preserving its historical memory. They provide deep insights into societal values, traditions, perspectives, and lifestyles. The national cultural elements embedded in English and Uzbek folk songs carry distinct meanings, offering a lens through which to understand the cultural essence of each nation. This article explores the significance of these elements as expressed in English and Uzbek folk traditions.

Key words: folklore, oral tradition, modern genres, lapars, yallas, harmony, human values, empathy.

Introduction

Folk music is a genre encompassing both traditional forms and the modern interpretations that emerged during the 20th-century folk revival. Sometimes referred to as world music, traditional folk is characterized by oral transmission, anonymous origins, the use of traditional instruments, and themes tied to cultural or national identity. It evolves through generations, adapting while retaining its core essence. Unlike commercial or classical music, folk music is deeply rooted in a nation's cultural narrative.

English folk songs, such as ballads, are instrumental in preserving historical narratives and cultural heritage. Similarly, Uzbek folk music, including lapars and yallas, encapsulates the values, traditions, and experiences of the Uzbek people. English folk songs often explore themes like nature, love, war, and heroism, frequently employing poetic expressions reflective of medieval times. For instance, the ballad Greensleeves celebrates romantic love and the beauty of nature. The 20th century saw significant efforts to revive English folk music through figures like Cecil Sharp and Ralph Vaughan Williams. Contemporary artists such as Steeleye Span and Fairport Convention have modernized these traditions while preserving their essence.

English folk songs include iconic pieces like:

- Greensleeves – A Tudor-era melody associated with romantic love.
- Scarborough Fair – A poignant ballad featuring impossible tasks, revived by Simon & Garfunkel.
- The Water Is Wide – A heartfelt tune about love and loss.
- Barbara Allen – A tragic story of love and heartbreak.
- The Wellerman – Originally a New Zealand shanty, now connected with English folk traditions.

Uzbek folk songs, on the other hand, focus on lyrical expressions of love, hospitality, and societal themes. Passed down through oral tradition, these songs were memorized and performed before literacy became widespread. Songs such as Lazgi exemplify Uzbek folk music, known for its rhythmic vibrancy and connection to traditional dance. Folk music in Uzbekistan has also influenced modern genres, with pop and rock flourishing since the 1990s.

Folk musicians have crafted simple yet profound melodies and ideas, shaping folk epics and poems to align with their artistic, ideological, and poetic essence. Consequently, integrating folk music into literature lessons, especially in grades 4-5 where folklore is a central focus, is highly beneficial. Teachers should seize this opportunity to enhance learning by establishing clear, interconnected objectives in the curriculum and leveraging specific teaching moments. In elementary school, as students begin to explore the characteristics of various musical genres, 4th grade marks their introduction to the fundamentals of music. At this stage, they learn about its simplest and most accessible forms, the distinction between professional music and compositions by trained composers, and the historical evolution of folk music as an artistic tradition. Folk music is characterized by its bright, fluid, and expressive tones, capable of evoking both melancholic and cheerful emotions. Lessons should involve discussions about renowned folk musicians and encourage students to ask and answer questions, fostering critical thinking and active participation. By 4th grade, students are expected to develop quicker and more analytical thinking, with an emphasis on engaging in discussions. In higher grades, folk music is approached more in-depth, with listening exercises playing a central role in understanding its complexities.

Uzbek folk songs feature energetic and dynamic rhythms, often employing dialogic structures and repeated patterns, as seen in lapars. Symbolism in folk songs differs between the two cultures. English folk songs frequently use imagery like trees, birds, and water to convey harmony with nature, while Uzbek songs incorporate symbols such as the sun, rivers, and silk to emphasize cultural values. Connecting lessons with discussions on Uzbek folk music allows students to explore the richness of its forms and genres, as well as its role as a source of inspiration for creativity. It is valuable to explain to students how Uzbek folk music reflects key events in the nation's history through its melodies and songs. By listening to examples of Uzbek folk songs, students can deepen their understanding of this musical tradition. After gaining insights into Uzbek folk songs, students can explore the connections between these and the folk music traditions of neighboring cultures, such as Turkmen, Azerbaijani, and others. A brief overview of the musical heritage of these peoples provides students with a broader and more comprehensive perspective. Extracurricular activities, such as listening to songs and melodies from the theme "Dances and Melodies of Fraternal Peoples," further enhance and reinforce the knowledge gained in the classroom. Through such activities, students develop a clear understanding of the distinctions between professional and folk music. In the upper grades, the study of folk music focuses more deeply on works such as Shashmaqom, a vibrant representation of the cultural brotherhood between Uzbek and Tajik peoples. Teachers should introduce students to renowned Shashmaqom masters, including Holim Ibodov, Abdulaziz Abdurasulov, and academician Yu. Rajabi. Students learn that

Shashmaqom emerged from a long tradition of Tajik and Uzbek folk music, evolving over time to become a form of classical folk music. The maqom series also share roots with the musical traditions of Turkish, Uyghur, and Iranian cultures. Discussing the similarities and shared features of these traditions helps students understand the ideological and cultural goals that connect them, fostering an appreciation for the shared heritage and diversity of the region's musical traditions.

Conclusion

English and Uzbek folk songs reflect the rich cultural heritage and identity of their respective nations. Their distinct cultural elements highlight historical, social, and cultural characteristics, offering valuable insights into the essence of each society. Moreover, studying folk music reveals commonalities between cultures, fostering mutual understanding and appreciation of global diversity.

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