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DEVELOPING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS THROUGH AN ETHNOPEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

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Annotatsiya. Etnopedagogik yondashuv xalq og'zaki ijodi, urf-odatlar, marosimlar va an'anaviy tarbiya vositalarini zamonaviy ta'lim jarayoniga tizimli tatbiq etish orqali shaxsni milliy qadriyatlar zaminida kamol toptirishga qaratilgan pedagogik yondashuv hisoblanadi. U xalq pedagogikasini (etnopedagogikani) ilmiy-nazariy asos sifatida oladi. Ushbu maqolada mazkur yondashuvning mohiyati yoritilib, uning asosida boshlang'ich sinf o'quvchilarida interkulturool kompetensiyani shakllantirish masalasi o'rganiladi. Maqolada Bayramning intermadaniy kommunikativ kompetensiya modeli yosh xususiyatlari yoritiladi. O'zbek xalq ertaklari, maqollari va milliy bayramlari asosidagi bosqichma-bosqich didaktik model taklif etiladi.

Kalit so‘zlar: Intermadaniy kompetensiya, boshlang'ich ta'lim, milliy qadriyatlar, etnopedagogika

Аннотация. Этнопедагогический подход представляет собой педагогический подход, направленный на всестороннее развитие личности на основе национальных ценностей путём системного внедрения устного народного творчества, обычаев, обрядов и традиционных средств воспитания в современный образовательный процесс. Опирается на народную педагогику (этнопедагогику) как научно-теоретическую основу. В статье раскрывается сущность данного подхода и на его основе рассматривается формирование межкультурной коммуникативной компетенции у учащихся начальных классов. Существующие исследования преимущественно ориентированы на средний и высший уровни образования, тогда как модель для младшего школьного возраста остаётся малоразработанной. Предлагается поэтапная дидактическая модель, адаптирующая модель Байрама к возрастным особенностям детей на основе узбекских сказок, пословиц и национальных праздников.

Ключевые слова: этнопедагогика, межкультурная компетенция, начальное образование

Abstract. The ethnopedagogical approach is a pedagogical approach aimed at the holistic development of the individual on the foundation of national values, through the systematic application of folklore, customs, rituals, and traditional means of upbringing within the modern educational process, drawing on folk pedagogy (ethnopedagogy) as its scientific-theoretical basis. This article first clarifies the essence of this approach and then, on that basis, examines the formation of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in primary school pupils. Existing research in the Uzbek context predominantly addresses secondary and higher education, leaving the primary level significantly under-studied. The article adapts Byram's model of ICC to the cognitive and psychological characteristics of young learners and proposes a stage-based didactic model grounded in Uzbek folk tales, proverbs, and national holidays as vehicles for early intercultural formation.

Keywords: ethnopedagogy, intercultural communicative competence, primary education, national values, young learners.

Introduction. The term *ethnopedagogy* (etnopedagogika) denotes the branch of pedagogical science that studies the educational experience accumulated by a people over centuries — its child-rearing practices, moral ideals, and the folk means through which these are transmitted across generations. The discipline was systematized primarily through the work of the Russian pedagogue **G. N. Volkov**, who is widely regarded as the founder of ethnopedagogy as an independent scientific field. In his foundational textbook *Etnopedagogika*, Volkov structures the discipline around several core categories: the *subject* of ethnopedagogy (folk upbringing as a historically formed system); the *pedagogical culture* of a people as an expression of its spiritual progress; the *folk ideal of the human being* (narodnyi ideal cheloveka) — the composite moral-behavioral model a given culture strives to instill in its children; and the *means* and *factors* of folk upbringing. Among the means, Volkov identifies folklore, proverbs and sayings, riddles, songs, games, and rituals; among the factors, he names nature, labor, everyday life, tradition, the surrounding social environment (obshchenie), and religion — elements that, taken together, constitute a coherent, self-sustaining educational system operating largely outside, and prior to formal schooling.

Building on Volkov's foundation, later scholars refined and extended the concept. G. V. Nezdemkovskaya, for instance, approaches ethnopedagogy as a synthesis of folk pedagogical experience with academic pedagogical theory, emphasizing its function as a bridge between spontaneous folk upbringing and systematized scientific pedagogy. V. S. Kukushin and S. A. Kharitonova likewise treat ethnopedagogy as both a descriptive science (documenting a people's historical child-rearing practices) and a normative one (offering these practices as a resource for contemporary educational design) — a duality that is central to how the *ethnopedagogical approach* is understood and applied today.

From these theoretical foundations, the ethnopedagogical approach in contemporary didactics can be defined as a methodological orientation that deliberately and systematically incorporates the means and factors of folk pedagogy — folklore, proverbs, tales, rituals, calendar holidays, and traditional games — into the modern educational process, with the

explicit aim of forming the learner's personality on the foundation of national values while remaining open to comparison and dialogue with other cultures. It is precisely this openness to comparison — rather than mere preservation of tradition in isolation — that allows the ethnopedagogical approach to serve as a natural precursor to intercultural competence development, since a learner must first possess a secure, internalized sense of their own cultural "self" (Byram's *savoir être* presupposes exactly this) before meaningful comparison with an "other" culture becomes psychologically and pedagogically possible.

In the Uzbek educational context, this approach carries particular weight. National educational policy documents place explicit emphasis on raising a well-rounded (*barkamol*) generation grounded in national and universal values, while simultaneously preparing learners for participation in an increasingly interconnected, multilingual world. English language teaching sits at the intersection of these two demands: it is, by definition, an encounter with a foreign culture, yet it need not — and, ethnopedagogical theory would argue, should not — come at the expense of the learner's own cultural grounding. Recent Uzbek-context scholarship on integrating national cultural content and realia into English classrooms confirms growing interest in this intersection, but, as noted above, this body of work concentrates almost entirely on secondary and tertiary learners, leaving open the question of how — and how early — this ethnopedagogical foundation should be laid.

It is the gap that the present article addresses: having now defined the ethnopedagogical approach itself, the remainder of the article turns to the question of how its means (tales, proverbs, rituals) can be adapted, stage by stage, to the cognitive and psychological profile of the primary-school English learner, in dialogue with Byram's model of intercultural communicative competence.

Materials and Methods. The present study employs a **theoretical-analytical design**, combining qualitative content analysis of ethnopedagogical source material with comparative-pedagogical analysis of existing ICC models. Given that no empirical intervention among primary-age learners has yet been conducted on this specific problem, the study is deliberately positioned as a **model-building (methodological) study**: its output is a didactic model intended for subsequent empirical testing, rather than a report of classroom trial results.

Three groups of material were analyzed:

1. **Theoretical-pedagogical sources** — Volkov's *Etnopedagogika* and related works (Nezdemkovskaya, Kukushin, Kharitonova), used to identify the means and factors of folk upbringing relevant to early childhood.
2. **Intercultural competence theory** — Byram's (1997) model and its practical elaboration by Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey (2002), used as the target competence framework to be adapted.
3. **Ethnopedagogical content corpus** — a purposive sample of Uzbek folk tales (*ertaklar*), proverbs (*maqollar*), and calendar-ritual holidays (*Navro'z*, *Mustaqillik kuni*) selected according to three criteria: (a) thematic accessibility to children aged 7–10, (b) presence of a clear, single moral or value focus suitable for simplification, and (c) feasibility

of adaptation into short, level-appropriate English texts, dialogues, or songs without semantic distortion of the original cultural content.

The core analytical procedure was a **comparative mapping** of Byram's five *savoirs* against the developmental characteristics of early-school-age children, drawing on general principles of age-related (*vozrastnaya*) pedagogy and developmental psychology — namely, the predominance of concrete-operational thinking, reliance on narrative, imagery, and play over abstract reasoning, and a still-forming capacity for perspective-taking. Each *savoir* was assessed against a single question: *at this age, can the competence be demonstrated in its full (analytical, comparative) form, or only in a reduced, seed form accessible through narrative and play?* This mapping produced the three-stage sequence presented in the Results section.

In parallel, each item in the ethnopedagogical content corpus (tales, proverbs, holidays) was evaluated for which stage of the sequence it was best suited to support, and for whether a natural English-language counterpart or point of comparison existed (e.g., an English proverb expressing a similar value), since such counterparts are what allow Stage 2 (guided noticing) to function pedagogically rather than remaining a purely monolingual cultural exercise.

Analysis.

Stage 1 — Cultural anchoring: sample tales

As established in the corpus analysis above, Stage 1 requires tales with a single, clearly identifiable moral and a concrete, easily visualized plot, since children at this age process narrative through image and event rather than abstract description. The following four Uzbek folk tales were selected from the corpus as representative examples, each evaluated against the same three criteria (thematic accessibility, single moral focus, and feasibility of English adaptation) used throughout the study:

Uzbek tale	Core moral	Why suitable for Stage 1
"Zumrad va Qimmat" (Zumrad and Qimmat)	Kindness and modesty are rewarded; envy and cruelty are punished	Clear binary structure (good sister / bad sister), single concrete moral, strong visual/narrative appeal for retelling with pictures
"Uch og'a-ini botirlar" (The Three Brave Brothers)	Courage, cooperation, and family loyalty	Simple quest structure; easily retold in short English scenes ("First brother said...")
"Yalmog'iz kampir" tales (cycle)	Cleverness and caution overcome brute threat	Familiar "trickster defeats monster" pattern, structurally close to Western tale types (e.g., Jack and the Beanstalk), which makes the retelling in English feel natural rather than foreign
"Sohibjamol"	Honesty and hard work are ultimately recognized	Short episodic structure suits a 10–12 minute classroom retelling

As the table shows, tales such as "*Yalmog'iz kampir*" carry an additional pedagogical advantage: their structural resemblance to familiar English-language tale types allows the teacher to introduce the foreign language through a *narrative shape the child unconsciously already half-recognizes*, easing the transition into Stage 1 without requiring any explicit cross-cultural comparison yet.

Sample classroom adaptation (Stage 1): the teacher tells "Zumrad va Qimmat" in short, simplified English sentences ("Zumrad was kind. She helped the old woman. Qimmat was rude. She did not help anyone."), supported by picture cards, ending with a simple concept check: *Who was kind? Who was rude?*

Stage 2 — Guided noticing: sample proverb pairs

Stage 2 moves beyond cultural anchoring toward the reduced form of *savoir comprendre* identified in the analysis: simple noticing of similarity, rather than analytical comparison. For this to function pedagogically, the corpus analysis showed that material must consist of *paired* items — a Uzbek unit and its closest available English counterpart — so that the child's task is concrete matching rather than abstract judgment. Proverbs proved the richest source of such pairs, since a substantial number of Uzbek proverbs share surface meaning with English proverbs despite using different imagery:

Uzbek proverb	Literal sense	Comparable English proverb	Value
Mehnat qilsang — rohat ko'rasan	If you work, you will enjoy the reward	No pain, no gain	Hard work
Bilim — baxt kaliti	Knowledge is the key to happiness	Knowledge is power	Value of learning
Do'st boshga kun tushganda bilinadi	A friend is known in hard times	A friend in need is a friend indeed	Friendship/loyalty
Kelgan mehmonga izzat qil	Honor the guest who comes	(no exact proverb — pair with) Treat guests as family	Hospitality
Onaning duosi — davo	A mother's blessing heals	(near-equivalent) Mother knows best	Respect for parents

Notably, the last two rows illustrate a limit case flagged earlier in the Discussion: where English offers no close proverbial equivalent (as with the Uzbek emphasis on hospitality), the pairing becomes asymmetrical. Rather than discarding such items, the analysis treats this gap itself as pedagogically usable — turning "we have this saying, do you?" into the discussion prompt, which is described in the activity below.

Sample classroom activity (Stage 2 — "proverb matching"): the teacher presents Uzbek and English proverb halves on separate cards; pupils physically match pairs that "say the same thing in two languages," then act out a two-line skit for one pair. For the hospitality example, the teacher instead frames it explicitly as *"this is a special Uzbek value — do English speakers have something similar?"*, converting the missing equivalent into a discussion point rather than avoiding it.

Stage 2/3 — Sample holiday elements (Navro'z)

National holidays occupy a distinctive position in the corpus: reduced to their most concrete, enactable elements (foods, greetings, symbolic objects), they support Stage 2 noticing in the same way proverbs do, but — unlike proverbs — their ritual, enactable nature also makes them the only corpus category structurally suited to Stage 3 perspective-taking activities, discussed below the table.

Concrete element	Simple English pairing	Stage
Sumalak (dish)	"We cook sumalak. In England, people bake special cakes for holidays too."	2
Green shoots / new growth symbolism	"Navro'z means new spring. Easter in England is also about new life."	2
Greeting: "Navro'zingiz muborak!"	"Happy Navro'z!" ↔ "Happy New Year!" / "Happy Easter!"	2
Family gathering & table-laying ritual	Guess-the-custom game (see below)	3

Sample "guess the custom" game (Stage 3): the teacher describes a custom without naming the holiday ("In this holiday, families cook a special sweet dish together and share it with neighbors") and pupils guess whether it is Navro'z or a holiday from another country shown earlier in class, then explain *why* they guessed that — a first, non-evaluative step toward perspective-taking.

Discussion. The analysis above yields several points that merit closer discussion, both for their contribution to filling the identified research gap and for the practical constraints they impose on future implementation.

The comparative mapping of Byram's *savoirs* onto early-school-age development shows that the gap in the literature is not merely a matter of "the same model applied to younger children," but a genuine developmental discontinuity. Two of the five *savoirs* (*savoir s'engager* and, in its full form, *savoir comprendre*) are not simply harder for young children — they are structurally inaccessible at this age, since both presuppose evaluative or analytical operations that concrete-operational thinking does not yet support. This confirms that existing Uzbek-context ELT literature, which adapts Byram's model largely by simplifying vocabulary and shortening tasks for secondary learners, cannot simply be scaled down further for primary pupils. What is needed instead — and what this study proposes — is a distinct three-stage sequence built around the *seeds* of the *savoirs* rather than reduced versions of their full form.

The corpus analysis revealed a clear asymmetry: tales cluster almost exclusively around Stage 1, while proverbs and holiday customs are the only material types capable of supporting Stages 2 and 3. This has a direct implication for curriculum design that is easy to overlook, since much of the existing Uzbek ELT literature on cultural integration treats "using folklore" as a single undifferentiated strategy. The present analysis suggests that tale-heavy lesson banks — however rich in cultural content — will, on their own, anchor children in their own culture (Stage 1) without ever moving them toward comparative noticing or perspective-taking (Stages 2–3). A pedagogically complete primary-level program therefore requires *deliberate diversification* of material type across the three stages, not simply a larger quantity of folklore content.

The proverb-pairing analysis showed that Stage 2 depends on genuine Uzbek–English equivalence or near-equivalence. Where such a counterpart exists (hard work, knowledge, friendship), the noticing task functions as intended. Where it does not (hospitality, respect expressed through blessing), the activity risks collapsing back into one-sided cultural transmission unless the teacher explicitly reframes the gap as a discussion point. This

suggests a subtler theoretical point: cross-cultural *asymmetry* is not necessarily a limitation to be engineered around, but can itself become a legitimate object of early intercultural noticing — arguably a more honest introduction to interculturality than a curriculum built only on convenient equivalences. This nuance is largely absent from the reviewed literature, which tends to foreground equivalence-based comparison and rarely addresses how to handle values with no ready counterpart.

Because the model depends on the teacher's ability to select, pair, and reframe material appropriately — particularly at the asymmetry points discussed above — its successful implementation is not purely a matter of providing a lesson bank. It also requires that primary English teachers possess at least a working understanding of ethnopedagogical principles themselves, which, as the introduction noted, is not currently a standard component of primary EFL teacher training in Uzbekistan. This points to a secondary, practice-oriented gap adjacent to the main research problem: the absence of teacher-training, material bridging ethnopedagogy **ethnopedagogy**, and early ELT methodology.

Positioned against the broader literature reviewed earlier, which consistently locates cultural-integration efforts at secondary and tertiary levels. The present findings suggest that intercultural competence should be reconceptualized not as a competence introduced *at* a particular educational stage, but as one whose *groundwork* must be laid earlier, through ethnopedagogical means, than current curricula assume. This reframes the primary-level gap identified in the introduction not as a minor oversight but as a structural weak point in the overall developmental logic of ICC formation as currently practiced in Uzbek English education.

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