

# Theoretical and Methodological Problems of Teaching Folk Epics

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## Abstract.

The article illuminates the results of research on the current state of teaching folk epics in general secondary schools and further improvements of its teaching technologies. The study examines the views of pupils of secondary schools and literature teachers in Uzbekistan on the specifics of teaching the subject of folk epics and presents the analytical results. Fifty teachers and 95 pupils participated in the survey and answered questions about what methods are used in teaching epics, and what were the difficulties on mastering them. This research aims to identify the role of teachers in teaching folk epics and the activity of schoolchildren in acquiring them.

**Key words:** literature, teachers, pupils/schoolchildren, folk epics/epics, textbook

## 1. Introduction

The psyche, thinking, customs and daily life of each nation are reflected in the masterpieces of world literature, such as the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, *Alpomish*, *Gorogly*, *Manas*, *Sosuni David*, and *Ramayana*. They should not be viewed simply as an invaluable epic legacy of history, but as an aesthetic in action. Since, this heritage has served for many years to educate humanity spiritually and aesthetically. They are eternal and we can still use them. We need to introduce them to pupils. Likewise, through modern methods of education, we need to bring the increasingly isolated and alienated schoolchildren closer to immutable national and universal values.

The study of epics is considered as a complex type of activity in literary education. This is based on the fact that the epics are large in size and have several options. Analyzing the epic scale in epics is complicated not only for pupils but also for teachers too. Unfortunately, the system of teaching folk epics today does not meet modern requirements. Folk epics are taught by narrating their content. Moreover, they are interpreted in the form of fairy tale. It is necessary to seek thought and wisdom in folk epics by comprehending the essence of the work.

Furthermore, it should be seen as a means of strengthening the psyche of man, of clarifying his spirituality. After all, the analysis of a work of art is a serious and complex process. Therefore, the teaching of literary interpretation of folk epics requires new and specific approaches. In methodological science, no matter how large the work being analyzed, no matter how short the time is, the content of the epic works should not be narrated. The existing problems require further improvements of the methodological system of teaching eposes. Otherwise, the literature teacher will be helpless, the literature lessons will be boring, and the conclusion from the work will remain as a "social exhortation".

## 2. Body of paper

Proper organization of the study of the work depends on the pedagogical skills of the teacher in all respects. The teacher should not only create conceptual questions that encourage the pupils to think, but divide them into small groups, give practical assignments on the topic, which intensifies the learning process and increases the enthusiasm of students. "Children can feel the events of the story more brightly and deeply while working together than in solitude" (Lutoshkin. 1978: 33).

In this sense, it is necessary to properly organize the lesson on a scientific and methodological basis by forming the skills of literary analysis in schoolchildren. Thus, it will be the basis for the development of pure human qualities in them, such as the enjoyment of beauty, the hatred of injustice, and the sympathy for the joys and sorrows of others.

At the same time, **the upbringing purpose** of the lesson is to form in schoolchildren such noble feelings as the heroes of the epics, not to be indifferent to the fate of their family, the homeland where they grew up, fidelity to promises, loyalty, courage, tolerance to a friend;

**The educational purpose** of the course is to inform pupils about folk eposes and their peculiarities, good ideas in the epic Alpomish, talented bakhshis and their unique performances, as well as teaching comparative analysis of the text of the epic, descriptive expressions, images and motives;

**The developmental goal** is to develop high human qualities in learners, such as good intentions, the struggle for the desired goal, the protection of honor and dignity of himself and his family in any situation, the constant pursuit of perfection. Also, to form a sense of responsibility for what he says, the way he chooses, the decision he makes.

It is impossible to teach everyone the same in the age of massive information. Therefore, this situation requires the teacher to take an individual approach to each child. What is more, it allows the child to work independently on the topic at the level of their ability. In this differential type of education, the teacher should be able to give tasks that correspond to the mental and intellectual abilities of each student.

Unfortunately, most learners are limited to reading a piece of artwork given in a textbook. It is essential to explain for them what they can get after reading the text fully. It is also important to be able to give the right motivation for them before reading books. Most of the questions and assignments asked after the story are focused on retelling the topic covered. That's good, of course. However, they would be methodologically expedient if they focused on the student's creative thinking.

Epics become impressive aesthetic-spiritual energy only when they are read, felt and understood by the reader. Unperceived beauty cannot affect a person's spirituality.

Therefore, the analysis of a work of art is highly valued in higher literary education. A ready-made knowledge is quickly forgotten. Knowledge that is acquired through independent thinking, reasoning, searching and hard work does not leave the pupils' heart and memory (Lazzarich, 2011: 4).

In the analysis of the work, it is better to focus the reader's attention on the beauty of the image, the artist's ability to choose words and the uniqueness of the expression, rather than the course of events and the place of the protagonists in the play. After all, one of the main tasks of teaching literature is to bring up schoolchildren who can read, understand and analyze a work of art, and who can freely express their opinions.

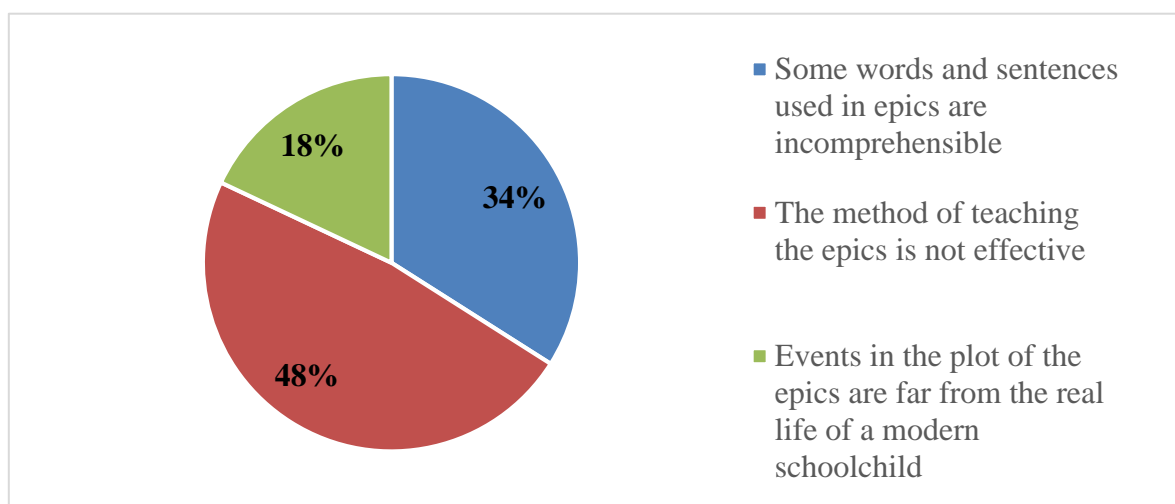
Many educators, and even some philologists, approach a work of art as an insignificant aspect of enjoyment, of astonishment. However, the inscription will not be valuable if it cannot please the reader and give him an aesthetic taste. Since, such work is not accepted by the reader. That is why the special attention paid to the artistic hedonistic and aesthetic aspects of the eposes allows a deeper insight into its essence. Rolan Bart, a theorist of structural poetics: "The fact that the text should be enjoyable is an important law that must not be forgotten regardless of any research commitment" (Bart, 1991: 156), - this aspect of the issue is also addressed in this resolution.

Let us now turn our attention to the analysis of questionnaires conducted among teachers and pupils of secondary schools in Uzbekistan.

Two surveys were conducted on the research topic. These experimental surveys aimed at identifying major trends. The respondents were selected by the method of spontaneous sampling. The first group of respondents was selected for an expert survey among school teachers. The key characteristics for the selection of experts are the presence of higher education and teaching experience of at least five years.

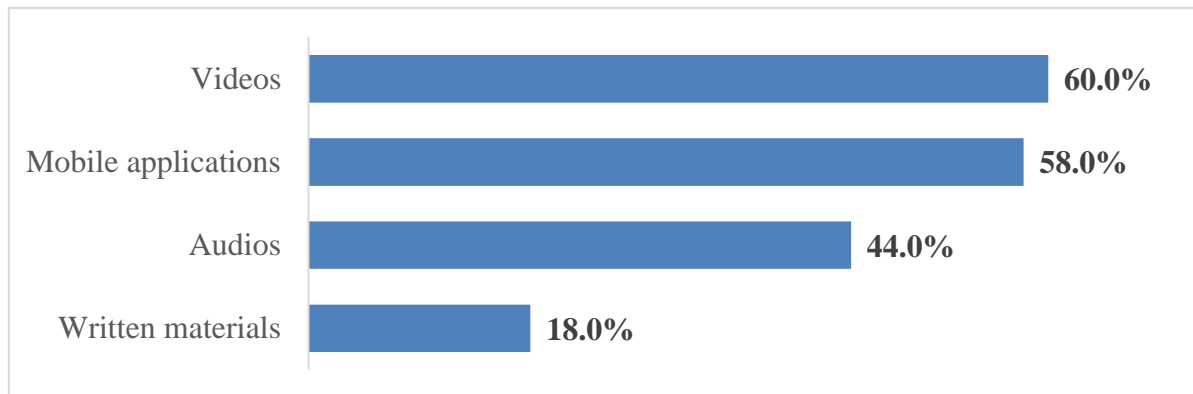
The second group of respondents is schoolchildren. Due to resource constraints, ninth grade schoolchildren of one of the schools in the city of Tashkent were interviewed. The results of the survey showed that the majority of teachers (48.0%) believe that the main problem in the study of eposes by schoolchildren is the separation of epic events from the realities of modern life (Figure 1).

*Figure 1. What are the main problems in mastering the topic of folk eposes?  
(In % of the number of respondents)*



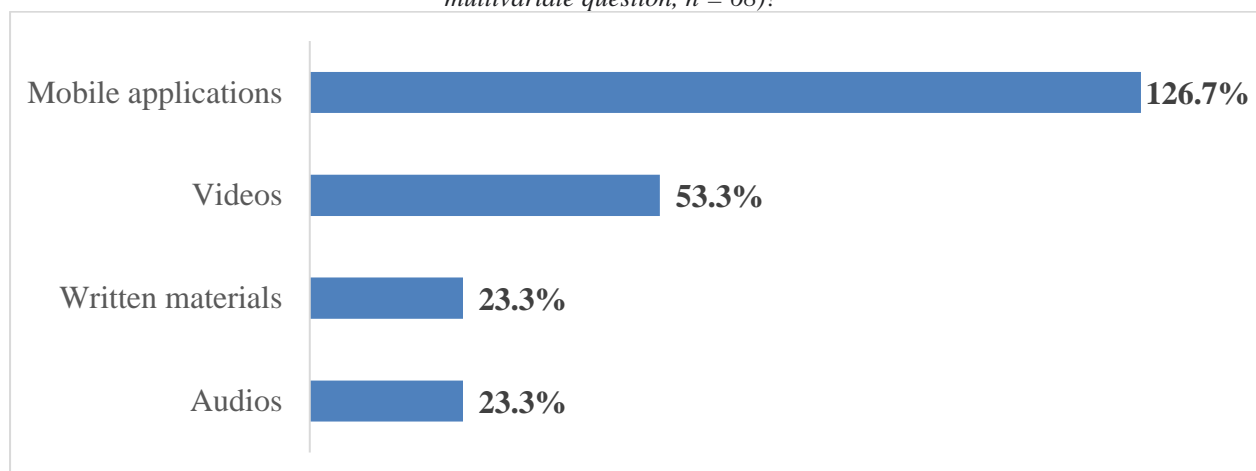
The survey also shows the demand for modern teaching materials (Figure 2). Thus, according to most experts, the most effective formats of educational materials for the study of folk epics are video materials (60.0%) and mobile applications (58.0%).

*Figure 2. Which format is most effective for students in mastering the topic of epics? (In % of the number of answers to a multivariate question, n = 90)*



The survey of schoolchildren as a whole confirms the vector of the need for a wider application of modern interactive teaching methods, at the same time there is a demand for an increase in educational materials in the format of mobile applications, which may be associated with a higher degree of adaptation of high school students to modern information technologies (Fig. 3).

*Figure 3. How would you like to teach more about the subject of folk epics? (In % of the number of answers to a multivariate question, n = 68)*



Despite the presence of a clear trend in the pupils' responses, that generally confirms the working hypotheses of the study, the results of these surveys are not representative, however, in the future, based on the results of the experimental survey, we plan to conduct mass surveys using complex sample models that can provide a high level of representativeness of the survey results.

The comparative study of each folk epic with the epics of other nations provides a great opportunity not only to organize the educational process in an interesting way, but also

to master them more easily, to cultivate students' literary and aesthetic taste, also, tolerance and internationalism.

The need to study a great epic in a short period of time and to analyze every piece of information and images given in it requires both the learner and the teacher to look for additional opportunities.

At the same time, the use of advanced pedagogical technologies that eliminate the indifference of the learner during the lesson and encourage him to be active, to think, to discuss, to reason, to explain, to research and to work, will have a good effect. But it is also not right to spend the main time of the lesson on various entertaining games just to keep the pupils interested and lift their spirits. Since curiosity and lightness alone are not a measure of artistic maturity. As long as schoolchildren lack free, independent, creative thinking, any modern pedagogical technology will remain ineffective.

Our analysis shows the need to further improve not only the teaching process, but also the literature textbooks and their methodological system, in line with modern requirements. After all, *Literature textbooks are a criterion that can determine the spirituality of a nation.*

### 3. Conclusion

The process of literary education cannot be standardized. The teacher chooses teaching methods of different forms and content, depending on the age characteristics of learners, the level of mastery, conditions of the classroom. A method that works very well in one group may not give the expected result in another group. Properly selected practical assignments and interactive methods such as working in small groups on the basis of tables, comparative analysis of the protagonists, various presentations, and the use of multimedia materials turn the reader from the listener to an active participant in the lesson.

The use of modern techniques in the classroom, such as the use of educational media materials, mobile applications, and interactive quiz assignments, does not mean that the traditional methods that have been used so far are completely rejected or not used at all. It will be necessary to apply them and also adapt to today's requirements.

We live in an era of evolving under the influence of the internet, where there is a strong need for information and knowledge. Existing needs show that we need to conduct education in a new way. The renewal of public life also requires qualitative changes in the processes of literary education. In this sense, one of the urgent tasks for specialists in the field is to create scientific and theoretical foundations of renewed pedagogical practice and to achieve its full implementation in practice.

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