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Изучение словенской народной песни в дошкольном музыкальном образовании

Просен Урбан, Просен Полона

Аннотация. Словенскую народную музыку отличает разнообразие, обусловленное различными историческими и географическими влияниями, которые проявляются как в вокальной, так и в инструментальной музыке. Словенская народная музыка играет важную роль в дошкольном возрасте. Воспитатели и учителя часто используют народные песни и музыку как средство для стимулирования развития ребенка, обучения языку, совершенствования музыкального слуха и социальных навыков. Теоретическая часть исследования, основанная на работах Д. Кунавера и М. Терсеглава, подчеркивает важность народной музыки в отражении и сохранении культурного наследия. Для этого мы хотели познакомить детей с одним из словенских регионов и научить их самому известному танцу этого региона. Целью исследования было обосновать возможность использования выбранных музыкальных методов обучения дошкольников для подготовки детей к самостоятельному выступлению перед родителями, включающему пение и танцы. Каждый метод был выбран на основе его теоретической значимости для содействия различным аспектам развития ребенка, таким как овладение языком, социальными навыками и моторным развитием. Также мы поставили перед собой следующую цель: через все шесть учебных направлений дошкольного образования (спорт, язык, искусство, общество, природа и математика) дети должны были обучаться танцу и развиваться во всех направлениях, которые подробно описаны в статье. В работе мы хотели проверить, насколько быстро дети учатся песне и танцу при выбранном методическом процессе, обучение проводилось с марта по май 2024 года. В эмпирической части статьи описывается и анализируется методический процесс изучения словенской народной песни «Лепа Анка коло води» с дошкольниками 5 лет. После реализации практического исследования мы обнаружили, что обучение по выбранному методическому процессу происходит значительно быстрее и эффективнее, он экономичен и требует гораздо большей подготовки от учителя, потому что работа более структурирована, так как мы делали упор на то, чтобы уроки проводились не фронтально, а так, чтобы дети большую часть времени были активны, а не в пассивной роли. В результате было доказано, что с помощью народной музыки дети успешно знакомятся с культурным наследием своей страны, учат тексты песен и развивают ритмические и мелодические способности. Народные песни часто включают элементы народных танцев, что позволяет детям изучать основные танцевальные шаги и одновременно развивать моторные навыки. Весь опыт дошкольников с народной музыкой можно рассматривать как важную часть культурного воспитания, способствующего формированию их идентичности и принадлежности к своей культуре. Научная новизна данного исследования заключается в изучении интеграции словенской народной музыки в раннее детское образование, в частности в фокусе на том, как современные педагогические методы, такие как использование игры, творчества и современных технологий, могут улучшить процесс обучения детей дошкольного возраста. В исследовании дается новое представление об эффективности этих подходов в обучении традиционным народным песням и танцам, демонстрируется их потенциал для ускорения развития ритмических и мелодических навыков. Кроме того, в работе подчеркивается роль этих инновационных методов обучения в сохранении культурного наследия и формировании сильной культурной идентичности у маленьких детей, тем самым вносится вклад в более широкую область культурного образования и развития детей раннего возраста.

EN

Learning Slovenian folk song in preschool music education

Urban Prosen, Polona Prosen

Abstract. Slovenian folk music is characterized by diversity, resulting from various historical and geographical influences, which are reflected in both vocal and instrumental music. Slovenian folk music plays a significant role in the preschool period. Educators and teachers often use folk songs and music to promote children's development, language learning, musical listening, and social skills. The theoretical part of this

study, grounded in the works of D. Kunaver and M. Terseglav, emphasizes the importance of folk music in reflecting and preserving cultural heritage. For this purpose, we wanted to introduce children to one of the Slovenian regions and teach them the most famous dance of this region. The aim of the study was to substantiate the potential of using the selected musical methods of teaching preschool children to prepare them for an independent performance in front of their parents, which includes singing and dancing. Each method was chosen based on its theoretical relevance to promoting various aspects of child development, such as language acquisition, social skills, and motor development. We also set ourselves the following goal: through all six curricular areas of pre-school education (sport, language, art, society, nature, and mathematics), children had to learn dance and develop in all areas, which are described in detail in the article. With the work, we wanted to check how quickly children learn song and dance with a selected methodical procedure, which was carried out from March to May 2024. The empirical part of the article describes and analyzes the methodological process of introducing the Slovenian folk song "Lepa Anka kolo vodi" to preschool children aged 5 years. After the entire implementation, we found that teaching with the chosen methodical process is significantly faster and more economical, and requires much more preparation from the teacher, because the work is more structured, since we emphasized the fact that the lessons were not conducted frontally, but in such a way that the children were active most of the time and not in a passive role. As a result, it was proved that through folk music, children become acquainted with the cultural heritage of their country, learn the lyrics of songs, and develop rhythmic and melodic abilities. Folk songs often include elements of national dances, allowing children to learn basic dance steps while simultaneously developing motor skills. The entire experience of preschool children with folk music can be regarded as an important part of cultural education, contributing to the formation of a child's identity and sense of belonging to their culture. The scientific novelty of this study lies in its investigation of the integration of Slovenian folk music into early childhood education, specifically focusing on how contemporary pedagogical methods, such as the use of play, creativity, and modern technology, can enhance the learning experience for preschool children. The research provides new insights into the effectiveness of these approaches in teaching traditional folk songs and dances, demonstrating their potential to accelerate the development of rhythmic and melodic skills. Furthermore, the study highlights the role of these innovative teaching methods in preserving cultural heritage and fostering a strong cultural identity in young children, thus contributing to the broader field of cultural education and early childhood development.

Introduction

Research relevance. Due to its geographical diversity, Slovenia has a very rich collection of folk songs for various occasions. Folk songs are created from simple texts, and the language is full of parables, which most often express joy or sadness. These kinds of poems describe people's everyday life, their worldview, thinking, emotions and beliefs (Kunaver, 1987). The language is simple and colloquial, as the mentioned songs contain dialect words, which show the authentic life of a certain environment (Terseglav, 1999).

Žnidaršič (2016) states the importance of introducing children to folk traditions in the early preschool period, as this is the only way Slovenian folk music will remain valued. It is important that adults emphasize to children the importance of Slovenian tradition and heritage, since this is how children will pass on their experiences with this kind of music to their descendants and others in adulthood. Important factors that influence musical development are heredity, environment, and personal activity that encourages the child. A stimulating family and social environment and the experience of musical content in the preschool period are key to the development of the abilities. Kindergarten plays an important role in preserving and promoting folk traditions and attitudes towards folk music (Denac, 2002).

The Kindergarten Curriculum (Kurikulum za vrtnice..., 1999) encourages children to encounter folk arts and crafts, rhythmic recitations of simple folk chants, singing children's and folk songs, folk dances, and playing folk instruments.

Research tasks. Specifically, we researched: 1. How the Play-Based Teaching Method promotes learning the lyrics and melodic pattern of a short children's folk song. 2. How the Creative Method encourages children to become accustomed to performing. 3. How the Social-Constructivist Method emphasizes group work and coordination in parts of the song where children must perform synchronized movements. 4. The characteristics of the Integrative Method, through which children learn about the specific Slovenian folk song and its features. 5. How to appropriately incorporate the Technology Use Method in introducing a new song and dance to preschool children.

Research methods. We carried out the practical part of the research with the children from March to May 2024, which ended with the final performance of the learned dance. This study involved a preschool music education class at the Sežana Music School. The class consisted of thirteen students, seven boys and six girls, with an average age of five. The practical part of the study lasted two months, concluding with a performance for parents. The theoretical part of the study served as a basis for the practical or empirical part, consisting of two segments: direct work with children and analysis of the group's progress. The study was conducted during regular classes, where folk music was a component of the weekly 45-minute sessions. The methods used for teaching the folk song and dance were based on Guštin's (2002) "Music Practice in Kindergarten," which includes the following methods: Play-Teaching Method, Creative Method, Social-Constructivist Method, Integrative Method, and Technology Use Method. We focused on specific situations and students' responses, as well as which teaching methods facilitated the quickest and easiest learning of a song, playing rhythmic instruments, choreography, and the complete dance.

The entire implementation followed a group learning format, minimizing the use of explanation and frontal instruction. Throughout the process, we conducted an analysis of pedagogical work after each session, which helped in assessing children's progress and achieving the set goals.

When reviewing the literature on Slovenian folk music, we can conclude that it is very important for our descendants, who are the successors and preservers of Slovenian folk music. We were interested in the two-month learning process according to the selected methodical procedure, which proved to be successful. After the completion of the project, we decided to use this type of work in the future. Although the preparations were somewhat more demanding and extensive than for normal lessons, the interest and enthusiasm of the children and later also that of the parents made the work worthwhile.

The empirical part of the study applied these theoretical methods in practice. The selection of the Slovenian folk song "Lepa Anka kolo vodi" and the associated dance was rooted in the belief that the cultural and rhythmic elements of folk music provide a rich, engaging learning experience for preschoolers. The methods described in "Music Practice in Kindergarten" (Guštin, 2002) are discussed further below.

Practical value of the research. The obtained results of the selected teaching methods proved to be effective and economical, as the children enjoyed themselves throughout the entire process, learned quickly and gained broad knowledge in all curricular areas. These results can be used for guidance in the introduction of any new song that covers several segments of music (singing, dancing, movement and performance).

Discussion and results

Slovenian folk songs

Folk songs were sung long before they were written down in verses and then published. Folk poetry is part of the cultural heritage that is very important to our nation. Folk songs are primarily sung and passed down through oral tradition, which is why this type of singing is characterized by a consistent rhythm, while the lyrics and melody may change (Stanonik, 1999). Folk songs are mostly strophic; initially, they did not contain rhymes, but over time, rhymes began to appear. In addition to simple lyrics, the melody is usually simple, characterized by a narrow range, often consisting of only a few notes. Folk songs are known for polyphony, where a soloist sings in the foreground, and others join in later (Kunaver, 1987).

Folk songs have always related to people's lives, accompanying daily life, especially during celebrations such as childbirth, weddings, deaths, work activities, and more. Due to changes in lifestyle, the songs passed down from generation to generation have also changed and continue to change. In Slovenia, the end of certain customs and traditions is marked by World War II, which significantly influenced many folk dances, songs, and other cultural traditions (Kunaver, 1987). Slovenian folk songs not only reflect life but also people's thoughts and feelings about nature, human relationships, and the supernatural. Kumer (1996) notes that despite the awareness of the homeland's beauty, there are somewhat fewer songs about nature and the homeland, which does not mean that Slovenians are not sensitive to this type of beauty. Military songs express concern for the homeland and separation from it. Animal songs are rare, except when they are realistic, part of love expressions, or in children's songs. In love songs, the mother, who plays an important role in the family, is often mentioned, while stepmothers, mothers-in-law, and daughters-in-law are portrayed negatively. Folk songs often depict social classes, attitudes toward different social roles, and beliefs in the supernatural, leading to the conclusion that these songs reflect the way of life, emotions, and thoughts of a certain period in Slovenian history.

Structure of Slovenian folk songs

Slovenian folk songs are mostly strophic in form, where a stanza can consist of just one verse. In newer songs, there are also five-, six-, or seven-line stanzas. In some forms of stanzas, individual verses differ completely from each other, while in others, they completely repeat. In narrative songs, a four-line stanza often appears, where the third verse consists of nonsensical syllables (e.g., 'tralala'), and the fourth verse is a repetition of the second. The chorus and refrain play an important role in Slovenian folk songs, which can appear at the end of a stanza or be inserted between verses (Kramolc, Kumer, Tomc, 1969).

The stanza form is closely related to the metric pattern of the individual verse. In two-line stanzas, a seven-syllable line with a pause after the fourth syllable (4 + 3) or the typical Slovenian three-part eight-syllable line (3 + 2 + 3) is common. In older songs, a six-syllable line appears, while in newer ones, a pair of eight- and seven-syllable lines (8/7) is used. In the so-called "jumping stanza," a pair of 5/4 or 5/6 lines appears, where syllables are always counted from the first stressed syllable onward. The metric pattern is well-preserved in some older songs and repeats throughout the song. In some songs, due to individual longer and shorter verses, this pattern is not maintained. In Prekmurje, the appearance of pentatonic scales is characteristic, while generally Slovenian folk music is characterized by simple songs composed of only a few tones. Folk songs are mostly written in major, rarely in minor (Kramolc, Kumer, Tomc, 1969). The rhythm of Slovenian folk songs mostly follows a five-beat pattern, such as 5/8, or alternates between 3/4 and 2/4. In the past, rhythms were written down in various ways, leading to the adaptation of songs into simpler forms, such as the classical 2/4-, 3/4-, and 4/4-time signatures, often written as a 3/4 rhythm with a dotted first quarter note. This led to the loss of some original rhythms, especially for teaching in schools. These forms significantly facilitated teaching children, as they made it easier for teachers to transfer knowledge to students, regardless of their familiarity with the original rhythms (Kramolc, Kumer, Tomc, 1969).

Slovenian folk songs are characterized by polyphonic singing. The styles of polyphonic singing differ in various parts of Slovenia. For example, two-part singing is common on the fringes of regions, while single-part singing is typical in the Bela krajina region. In Prekmurje, quartal two-part singing appears, where the accompanying voice can be below or above the leading voice. In central Slovenia, the most common form is classic two-part singing with a third or sixth, where the leading voice can be either above or below. In three-part singing, the middle voice prevails, while the accompanying voice sings above the leading voice, and the lower voice sings the bass. Occasionally, a fourth voice appears above the upper voice, called "na tretko." Rare tenors can also sing "firar," considered the highest voice in five-part Slovenian folk singing (Ramovš, 1995).

Drone is also characteristic of folk music, involving a prolonged or repeated fundamental note or sound accompanying the main melody (Purser, 2007). In Slovenian folk music, drones are often used when playing bagpipes, violins, and accordions. Besides these, drones are used by other folk instrumental ensembles. In these cases, the drone contributes to the rhythmic and harmonic foundation, creating a rich and full sound characteristic of Slovenian folk music (Pisk, 1998).

Children's folk poetry

Children's songs consider the child as an autonomous individual, for whom play represents the main and most important communication with the world (Grafenauer, 1991). Children's songs and poetry address children in a child-friendly manner, meaning that serious adult themes are also treated in a way that is accessible to children, i.e., through experiential description and illustration (Stražar, 1982). Similarly, Grafenauer (1991) states that all motifs in children's songs are set in a so-called child's perspective, which allows the child room to foster curiosity, spontaneous wonder, relaxed play, etc. Adults (creators), who represent authority to children, provide them with security in this context, while through the identification with children's songs, they step out of adult frameworks and subtly create important existential relationships.

Žnidaršič (2016) notes that children's folk music no longer plays as significant a role in contemporary times as it once did. Children listen to music even before birth, so it is crucial what kind of music mothers listen to during pregnancy. The primary educators of children are parents, grandparents, and others close to the child. Thus, children are exposed to the music that their surroundings listen to, and it is known that folk music is insufficiently included in the child's daily life. It is essential for those closest to the child to introduce them to folk heritage at an early preschool age, as only then will Slovenian folk music remain valued. It is important that adults emphasize the significance of Slovenian heritage and traditions to children, as this will ensure that children, even in adulthood, will pass on their experiences with this kind of music to their descendants and others.

Children's folk music in the preschool period

Preschool education and the initial years of primary school are crucial for the development of musical abilities. Important factors influencing musical development include heredity, environment, and personal activity that stimulates the child. A supportive family and social environment, along with experiencing musical content in the preschool period, are key for developing these abilities. Kindergartens play an important role in preserving and promoting folk heritage and the relationship to folk music (Denac, 2002).

The Kindergarten Curriculum (Kurikulum za vrtce..., 1999) encourages children to encounter folk arts and crafts, rhythmic recitations of simple folk chants, singing children's and folk songs, folk dances, and playing folk instruments. In the curriculum, musical activities relate to singing, playing, listening, creating, and dancing.

Key to introducing children to folk heritage is presenting it in the right way. Children live in a world dominated by childlike experiences, so it is important to use this time to introduce them to the values of folk and cultural heritage in an interesting and non-intrusive way. Teaching folk heritage in preschool education does not mean restricting it to folklore groups where children prepare for performances. Instead, we should try to make children accept dance and singing as everyday play or entertainment. Recreating folk heritage requires knowledge of various aspects of our spiritual and material heritage and the understanding of stage principles and pedagogical methods that enable successful content transmission to younger generations (Kmetec, 2010).

The impact of folk music on child development

Folk music plays an important role in the overall development of children in the preschool period. Through various activities related to folk music, children develop different abilities or skills, such as:

- **Language and Speech Development:** Folk songs allow children to learn new words and expressions, enriching their vocabulary. Research shows that children acquire better phonological awareness through music, which is crucial for later reading skills (Paquette, Rieg, 2008). Songs also help children understand the natural rhythms and melody of the language, which is essential for speech development (Barton, 2015).

- **Encouraging Social Skills:** Participation in group musical activities such as singing and dancing promotes social interaction and cooperation, helping children learn social rules and skills, such as listening, sharing, and cooperating (Lynch, Simpson, 2010). Additionally, through folk songs, children become acquainted with the cultural heritage of their environment, strengthening their sense of community belonging and cultural identity (Campbell, 1998).

- **Physical Development:** Folk songs often include movement activities that help develop gross motor skills. Activities involving music and movement are key to cultivating motor skills in children (Pica, 2010). Dancing and playing simple instruments help develop coordination and fine motor skills, as confirmed by studies on the impact of musical activities on children's motor development (Zachopoulou, Tsapakidou, Derri, 2004).

– **Emotional and Psychological Development:** Music is a powerful means of expressing and understanding emotions. Through songs, children learn to recognize and express their emotions, contributing to emotional intelligence and better psychological well-being (Hui, Yuen, 2010). Creating and interpreting music also stimulates children's creativity and imagination. Research shows that musical activities promote cognitive processes related to creativity and problem-solving (Hallam, 2010).

Musical teaching methods for preschool children

Guštin (2002) provides various insights into the field of musical education in the preschool period in his work. The topics discussed include methods of teaching music, development of musical abilities in children, the impact of musical activities on other aspects of child development, including social and emotional development, and the importance of folk music within preschool music education. The author, with his work "Music Practice in Kindergarten," offers guidelines for educators and other adults working with preschool children who want to improve the quality of music education. Guštin (2002) mentions various methods of teaching music in kindergartens, namely:

- **Play-Based Teaching Method:** Emphasizes play as the main way of teaching, where children learn about music through singing, playing instruments, dancing, etc.
- **Creative Method:** Encourages children's creativity in producing their own music, which can be created through improvisation, composition, or using different sound materials.
- **Social-Constructivist Method:** Highlights collaborative learning and group work, where children create music together, exchange ideas, and learn from each other.
- **Integrative Method:** Allows holistic learning and development of the child by connecting music with other areas such as language, mathematics, science, etc.
- **Use of Technology:** Involves using modern technological tools (computer programs, applications, online resources, etc.) that enable interactive learning and music creation.

The process of learning children's songs

Learning songs in kindergarten is an educational and engaging activity that stimulates child development. A well-chosen song with simple lyrics and repeating refrains is crucial for effective learning. In the introductory part, the song is presented to children through a story or pictures, which helps establish a connection between the song's lyrics and their understanding. This is followed by a gradual approach to learning the lyrics, where the teacher sings the song in parts while the children repeat. Research shows that such an approach to learning is effective in enhancing memory and understanding of the lyrics (Fisher, Frey, 2013).

During song learning, special attention is also given to melody and rhythm. Clearly intoning the song and emphasizing the rhythmic structure through movement stimulates children's musical perception (Gordon, 1997). Movement activities synchronized with the rhythm of the song further enhance children's motor skills (Kodály, 1974). Repetition of the song plays a key role in consolidating what has been learned. Regular repetition of songs in daily activities in kindergarten, such as transitions between activities or cleaning up, helps children strengthen memory and connect music with everyday experiences (Sousa, 2006). Group singing and collaboration in learning songs further promote children's social skills, such as cooperation and respect for others (Wood, Bruner, Ross, 1976).

Play-Based Teaching Method

This method emphasizes play, so we started the activity with a circle game to engage the preschool music education students. The teacher placed traditional instruments from the Bela krajina region (clay bass, tamburica, horn, whistles, etc.) in the center of the circle and asked the students about them. Since most students were unfamiliar with these instruments, a discussion ensued. The teacher introduced and played the instruments. The students then learned the lyrics and melody using the echo method, where the teacher sang a part of the song, and the children repeated it. This teaching method took four sessions. For preschoolers, the appropriate range for singing and playing is from d1 to a1, consistent with Kodály (1983), who stated that the initial singing range for children is between one-line d and h in the same octave. He also suggested starting with the lower part of this range. For preschool children, simple and repetitive lyrics, along with encouraging creativity through coordination of singing and playing instruments, are suitable.

Creative Method

This method encourages children to create their own music by improvising, composing or using different sound materials. This method did not come to the fore in the song, as the chosen folk dance already has a formed and established choreography. Nevertheless, the described method proved to be good because the children created sounds with their own bodies (emphasizing the rhythm when moving and singing). The teacher employed this method to encourage them to get used to performing in front of an audience.

Social-Constructivist Method

This method, which emphasizes group learning and work where children exchange ideas, support each other, and learn from one another, was fundamental. It was particularly evident when the preschool music education students had learned the lyrics and began learning the choreography, which required cooperation and coordination. The teacher sang, danced, and guided them throughout the entire song, as it was quite challenging for them.

Integrative Method

We employed the integrative method throughout the process, extending the topic to all areas of the "Kindergarten Curriculum: Preschool Education in Kindergartens" (Kurikulum za vrtce..., 1999). The teacher introduced Bela krajina and its characteristics (customs and traditions) briefly, connecting to the curricular area of society. The children learned about the national costume, singing, and the kolo dance specific to the region. We followed the arts objectives, which include learning and teaching (folk) songs, playing instruments, and dancing. We also touched on the mathematics area by counting dance steps, aiding the students in quickly mastering the choreography. In the natural sciences area, the teacher brought a large birch branch, typical of Bela krajina and its folklore group, where a man is wrapped in green birch branches. To illustrate this, the teacher showed A3-sized laminated pictures of the folklore group and the so-called "Zeleni Jurij" (Green George) at the beginning of the session. We also achieved the language area goals by learning Croatianisms present in the song's lyrics. The teacher explained this aspect, characteristic of the region. For the movement area, we focused on dance expression and the kolo choreography.

Technology Use Method

Modern technology was initially used to show the students a video of folklore and their traditional circle dance, helping them visualize what they would learn. This method allows for interactive learning and exploration of new knowledge. The teacher also showed a large map, comparing the Bela krajina region to their region (Primorska) in terms of distance and characteristics. Later, we used modern technology to aid in learning the circle dance, as it was tiring for the students to sing and learn dance steps at the same time. Additionally, the students visibly enjoyed and compared themselves to the folklore dancers during the video playback.

Conclusion

This study successfully solved the research tasks outlined in the introduction by evaluating the effectiveness of different teaching methods in preschool music education. The Play-Based Teaching Method effectively involved children in Slovenian folk music through interactive and playful activities, while the Social-Constructivist Method proved to be essential in promoting coordination and teamwork. The Creative Method, although less crucial to the primary song, strengthened performance skills, and the Integrative Method effectively connected the folk song to broader educational goals. The Use of Technology is secured by valuable support in visualizing and understanding the dance. These findings not only prove the effectiveness of these methods in teaching folk music, but also emphasize the importance of including Slovenian cultural heritage in preschool education. Future research could investigate the long-term impact of these methods on children's cultural appreciation and musical development, and the insights gained from this study may contribute to wider application in early childhood education. This study highlights the potential for preserving and promoting cultural traditions through thoughtful and diverse educational practices.

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Информация об авторах | Author information

RU

Просен Урбан¹
Просен Полона²

¹ Люблянский университет, Словения

² Сежанская музыкальная школа; Университет Марибора, Словения

EN

Urban Prosen¹
Polona Prosen²

¹ University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

² Sežana Music School; University of Maribor, Slovenia

¹ urban.prosen@pef.uni-lj.si, ² polona.prosen@quest.arnes.si

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