

Folklore as a means of cultural adaptation and patriotic education of preschool children

Mariia Chornii¹

Опубліковано	Секція	УДК
30.09.2025	Освіта	373.2:398:37.017.4

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21587509>

Annotation. Ukrainian folklore plays an important role in the cultural adaptation and patriotic education of preschool children. The study is based on an analysis of scholarly literature and on pedagogical observations accumulated during 18 years of professional practice in preschool institutions in Lviv. Observations show that different folklore genres, including lullabies, rhymes, riddles, fairy tales, and ritual songs-support speech development, memory, emotional stability, and social interaction in preschoolers. Patriotic feelings at this age emerge mainly through direct emotional contact with native cultural traditions rather than through the memorization of factual information. The paper also considers the age-specific use of folklore with children aged 4–5 and 5–6 and summarizes the results of pedagogical observations and parent questionnaires.

In practice, the regular use of folklore helps children adapt more quickly to a new environment, including those who have been displaced. Over time, children begin to use folk expressions in their everyday speech without prompting, and these elements also appear in family interactions. Parents often continue these practices at home, even without direct encouragement from teachers.

These findings are based on long-term pedagogical practice and offer an empirical perspective that is still limited in existing research.

Keywords: folklore, preschool education, cultural adaptation, patriotic education, cultural identity, speech development, folk pedagogy, displaced children.

Фольклор як засіб культурної адаптації та патріотичного виховання дітей дошкільного віку

Анотація. Важливу роль у культурній адаптації та патріотичному вихованні дітей дошкільного віку відіграє український фольклор. Дослідження базується на аналізі наукової літератури та педагогічних спостереженнях, накопичених за 18 років професійної практики в дошкільних закладах м. Львова. Спостереження показують, що різні фольклорні жанри, зокрема колискові, скоромовки, загадки, казки, обрядові пісні сприяють розвитку мовлення, пам'яті, емоційній стійкості та соціальному спілкуванню дошкільників. Патріотичні почуття в цьому віці виникають переважно через безпосередній емоційний контакт з рідними культурними традиціями, а не через запам'ятовування фактичної інформації. У роботі також розглянуто вікові особливості

¹ Mariia Chornii, Methodologist-Preschool Teacher, Faculty of Preschool Education Organization, Kremenets Regional Humanitarian and Pedagogical Academy named after Taras Shevchenko, <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-9143-8779>

використання фольклору з дітьми 4–5 та 5–6 років та узагальнено результати педагогічних спостережень та анкетування батьків.

На практиці регулярне використання фольклору сприяє швидшій адаптації дітей у новому середовищі, в тому числі тих, хто переїхав. Згодом діти починають без спонукання вживати народні вислови у повсякденному мовленні, ці елементи з'являються і в сімейному спілкуванні. Батьки часто продовжують цю практику вдома, навіть без прямого заохочення вчителів.

Ці висновки базуються на довгостроковій педагогічній практиці та пропонують емпіричну перспективу, яка все ще обмежена в існуючих дослідженнях.

Ключові слова: фольклор, дошкільне виховання, культурна адаптація, патріотичне виховання, культурна ідентичність, розвиток мовлення, народна педагогіка, діти-переселенці.

Вступ / Introduction

Since 2022, the large-scale displacement of Ukrainian families has changed the everyday work of preschool institutions. Many children have entered new kindergartens after leaving familiar social environments, which has made questions of cultural belonging and psychological adaptation particularly important. This situation highlights the need to understand how children aged three to six develop a connection to their native culture.

The current Basic Component of Preschool Education 2021 establishes among the learning outcomes the ability of a child to identify themselves as a bearer of their native language and culture [1]. The Law of Ukraine "On Preschool Education" dated June 6, 2024, No. 3788-IX defines the cultural and patriotic development of preschoolers as one of the priority tasks of preschool education [10]. Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine No. 527 of 06.06.2022 outlines specific approaches to the organisation of national and patriotic education in educational institutions [9]. However, there remains a significant gap between the normative guidelines and the actual pedagogical mechanisms for achieving them: the documents set out the desired results, but do not reveal the forms of work through which these results can be achieved at preschool age.

Folklore corresponds to the cognitive and emotional characteristics of preschool age: it operates through rhythm, image, movement, and collective participation rather than abstract explanation. This structural alignment between folk forms and preschool perception makes folklore a potentially effective tool - but the conditions under which this potential is realized in practice remain underspecified in the literature. In particular, no existing study tracks the spontaneous transfer of folklore material into children's free communication or documents the family-level effects of preschool folklore work.

In scientific literature, folklore issues are presented unevenly. Either narrowly linguistic studies (folklore as a means of speech development) or organizational and methodological developments (scenarios for holidays, thematic plans) predominate. A comprehensive analysis of the educational potential of folklore in combination with cultural adaptation, patriotic, and speech dimensions is much less represented in scientific discourse. Practical experience of the systematic application of folklore in real early childhood education with a description of specific results and indicators remains insufficiently generalized.

The purpose of the article is to investigate the mechanisms of folklore's influence on the cultural and patriotic development of preschoolers and to substantiate the conditions under which this influence is most effective. To achieve this goal, the following tasks were set: to analyze scientific approaches to understanding the educational potential of children's folklore; to describe the methods and forms of folklore work with differentiation by age groups; to present the results of pedagogical observations and parent questionnaires; to determine the conditions under which the folklore approach becomes systematic across the institution.

Literature review. Research into the educational potential of children's folklore is presented in Ukrainian pedagogical science from various methodological positions, and in order to understand the current state of the problem, it is advisable to consider them in three directions: genre-pedagogical, linguistic, and patriotic-identification.

The genre-pedagogical direction is most fully represented in the teaching manual by Koval T. V., Komarivska N. O., and Kolesnik K. A., *Ukrainian Children's Folklore* (2024) [2]. The authors systematize the genres of children's folklore and characterize each of them as a pedagogical tool with specific functions. Lullabies form emotional security and the first images of the native language; nursery rhymes and counting rhymes develop rhythmic speech and fine motor skills; riddles stimulate imaginative thinking and the ability to use metaphors; proverbs convey a normative system of values in a concise and memorable form; ritual songs connect the child with the cultural calendar of the people. According to Koval et al., the fundamental pedagogical advantage of such diversity lies in the fact that different genres engage different cognitive and emotional processes, which allows folklore to be integrated into any form of educational activity without overloading the schedule.

The linguistic direction of research is represented by the work of Vatamanyuk G. P. [4], which focuses on small folklore genres as a tool for enriching the speech of preschoolers. The researcher demonstrates that the regular use of counting rhymes, tongue twisters, riddles, and proverbs leads to a noticeable increase in children's speech activity and the appearance of figurative expressions in their everyday speech. Vatamanyuk attributes this effect to the linguistic properties of folk texts. Specific rhythmic organization promotes memorization, archaic vocabulary expands passive and active vocabulary, and the syntactic constructions of riddles and proverbs develop coherent speech skills. It is important that the author considers folklore not as an end in itself but as an organic, natural developmental environment for children.

The patriotic-identification direction is represented by several complementary studies. Zhuravko T. analyzes the psychological mechanisms of patriotism formation in older preschoolers and concludes that this age is sensitive for the assimilation of the emotional experience of love for the Motherland [3]. The author's key thesis is that patriotic education in preschool age is effective if and only if the child is an active participant in cultural activities, rather than a passive recipient of information. Rozlutska G. and Kurytsia V. confirm this thesis through the prism of theatrical activity: their 2023 study [5] shows that the inclusion of folk forms in theatricalization forms more stable patriotic values than traditional conversations and explanations, since the child experiences the cultural plot from within, rather than observing it from the outside. Their findings concern theatrical forms specifically; whether the same mechanism operates through games and ritual songs is not addressed.

Lutsenko I. broadens the understanding of patriotic education by introducing the dimension of family partnership [6]. The author argues that a child's lasting patriotic feelings are formed not in isolation at school, but through reinforcement from the family: the experience gained in preschool should be echoed at home. This leads to a practical conclusion: teachers should purposefully involve parents in folklore events and provide them with simple tools to continue traditions in the family circle. What remains unaddressed is whether children themselves can initiate this transfer without adult prompting. Miskova N. M. analyzes folk games as an integral pedagogical tool that combines physical, linguistic, and social development [7]. The researcher shows that it is this integrality that makes folk games particularly valuable: teachers achieve several educational goals at once, without the need to break them down into separate lessons.

The problem of cultural adaptation and psychological recovery of children in forced displacement has become particularly relevant after 2022. A collection of materials from a methodological seminar held by the Institute of Education Problems of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine (2023) contains a number of reports confirming the key role

of cultural practices in restoring a sense of security, stability, and belonging in children who have been torn from their native environment [8]. However, most of the reports formulate general approaches without specifying the mechanisms for their implementation through folklore in working with preschoolers. This gap between general recommendations and practical descriptions is characteristic of much of the literature on the subject.

A summary of the analysis of scientific sources reveals that existing studies mostly examine individual dimensions of folklore influence - linguistic, patriotic, socialization, and adaptation - in isolation. Domestic pedagogical literature does not present a comprehensive approach that would combine all these dimensions into a single theoretical framework supported by data from systematic, practical observations in real preschool settings with specific indicators. The present study addresses this gap by combining speech, identity, and adaptation dimensions in one observational framework, and by introducing data on family-level transfer and first-days-of-adaptation effects absent from existing literature.

Materials and methods. This study is designed as a qualitative observational study based on long-term pedagogical practice. The methodological basis of the study consists of the analysis and systematization of scientific sources in combination with the generalization of pedagogical observations accumulated during 18 years of practice in state preschool educational institutions in Lviv (Preschool Educational Institution No. 29 and Preschool Educational Institution No. 8). General scientific methods were applied: analysis, synthesis, comparison, systematization, and a structural-functional approach to the description of pedagogical phenomena.

Data were collected through structured and semi-structured pedagogical observations, as well as a descriptive parent survey. The research material consisted of: structured pedagogical observations in working with different age groups from nursery to preparatory age (a total of more than 18 years of practical experience); the results of a survey of parents of children in groups where folklore forms of work were systematically used; data from observations of groups of displaced children in the 2022–2023 academic year at Preschool No. 8 in Lviv; materials from open classes and master classes conducted as part of methodological work with the pedagogical staff of the institution.

The observational material is based on approximately 300–350 children accumulated over 18 years of work in two preschool institutions in Lviv (Preschool No. 29 and No. 8). In each academic year, groups typically included 20–25 children.

Observations of displaced children were carried out during the 2022–2023 academic year in two mixed-age groups at Preschool No. 8 (around 40–45 children in total).

The parent survey, conducted at the end of the same academic year, included 76 respondents whose children participated in groups where folklore activities were used systematically.

The methodological work related to the implementation of this approach involved approximately 15–20 teachers from the staff of Preschool No. 8.

Pedagogical observation was carried out according to the following parameters: the level of children's speech activity (frequency of use of figurative expressions, folk words and phrases in free communication); involvement in folklore activities (percentage of children actively participating in singing songs, playing games, and creative tasks); emotional response (positive attitude towards folk symbols and traditions, desire to repeat the experience at home); adaptation dynamics (readiness to interact with peers and teachers at an early stage of being in a new group).

A questionnaire survey of parents was conducted at the end of the school year after a series of thematic events of a patriotic and ethnographic nature. The questionnaire included questions about whether parents noticed changes in their child's speech, their attitude to symbols and traditions, and their desire to repeat folk songs and games at home. The results

were summarized descriptively, without the use of statistical data processing methods, since the observations were made in the natural conditions of educational activity, rather than in a controlled experiment.

The study uses descriptive analysis without inferential statistical processing. The reported percentages should be interpreted as observational indicators rather than statistically validated measurements.

Результати / Results

Across 18 years of observation, three consistent patterns emerged regardless of group composition or academic year: speech development, the formation of cultural identity and patriotic feelings, and social adaptation.

In the area of speech development, after weeks of ethnography and regular use of small folklore genres, children began to use folk expressions in free communication outside of class - without reminders from the teacher. Archaic words, figurative expressions, and rhythmic constructions from counting rhymes and riddles were recorded in the everyday speech of children of both age groups (4–5 and 5–6 years old). In the older group (5–6 years old), the transfer of learned folk images into their own speech creativity was observed: children independently composed riddles based on folk models and used proverbs in appropriate situations.

In the sphere of patriotic education and cultural identity, based on the results of thematic holidays and patriotic activities, about 70–80% of children recognized the state symbols of Ukraine and understood their meaning, 60–70% actively participated in singing songs and reciting poems about their homeland, 75% participated with interest in thematic games and creative tasks, and about 70% of children showed a pronounced positive emotional attitude towards their native land. After Kupala festivities and Christmas caroling, the children independently recreated songs and games in their free time.

A survey of parents at the end of the school year showed the following results: 80% of parents noted that their children had started talking about national symbols and holidays at home; 75% noticed an increase in their children's interest in Ukrainian songs and traditions; 70% believe that themed events contribute to the development of love for their homeland. It is particularly noteworthy that parents who themselves participated in the institution's folklore events reported continuing these practices at home - including those who previously considered folk traditions irrelevant.

Percentages refer to the proportion of children within the observed groups participating in the respective activities.

Table 1

Results of pedagogical observations and parent survey on the use of folklore in preschool education

Area of observation	Indicator	Result
Speech development	Use of folk expressions in spontaneous speech	Observed after several weeks of systematic folklore activities
Speech creativity (5–6 years)	Independent composition of riddles based on folk models	Observed in the older preschool group
Speech development	Use of proverbs in appropriate situations	Recorded in the 5–6 age group
Patriotic education	Recognition of state symbols of Ukraine	70–80% of children
Cultural participation	Participation in songs and poems about the homeland	60–70%
Cultural participation	Interest in thematic games and creative activities	75%

Emotional attitude	Positive emotional attitude toward the native land	about 70%
Parent survey	Children talk about national symbols and holidays at home	80%
Parent survey	Increased interest in Ukrainian songs and traditions	75%
Parent survey	Parents who believe folklore activities foster patriotism	70%

Source: developed by the author

Observations during the study also concerned children's social adaptation in preschool groups. When folk games were introduced during the first days of a child's stay in a new group, newly arrived children usually became involved in joint activities more quickly. One of the reasons is that the rules of such games are easily understood through observation and movement-based participation, which allows children to join the activity even before they feel confident communicating verbally.

This was particularly noticeable among displaced children in 2022–2023. Familiar songs and folk games helped them maintain a sense of connection with their culture in a new environment and made it easier to interact with peers and teachers. In practice, children joined group activities more quickly when such forms were used. In many cases, a child who remained on the periphery during free play would join a folk game within the first 1–3 sessions in which it was introduced, often before initiating verbal contact with peers.

Differentiating the results by age group revealed patterns that are important for methodological practice. In the 4–5 age group, musical and movement activities showed the highest level of engagement and memorization: counting rhymes, active folk games, song games, and simple spring songs were remembered much more firmly than prose texts. In the 5–6 age group, the most effective activities were the staging of folk tales and thematic weeks of ethnography, where various activities were combined around a single cultural phenomenon over several days. It was in this group that the transfer of acquired cultural material into independent activity and the home environment was most clearly observed.

1. Speech Development. The results obtained allow for a systematic comparison with the conclusions of previous studies and clarify a number of theoretical propositions presented in the literature.

In the field of speech development, the results confirm the conclusions of Vatamanyuk G. P. [4] about the positive influence of folklore on the speech activity of preschoolers. At the same time, observations allow us to clarify the mechanism of this influence. The researcher describes the effect at the level of the lesson: children speak more actively and use more words. Practical data indicate a deeper mechanism of delayed transfer: acquired images and expressions appear in free communication days or weeks after systematic work, without any reminders. This suggests that the material has been genuinely learned rather than simply reproduced in a specific situation. For educators, an important indicator is whether children use elements of folklore spontaneously in everyday communication rather than only during structured activities. Such results usually emerge only through regular and systematic work, not through occasional activities.

2. Patriotic Education. In the field of patriotic education, the results confirm Zhuravko T.'s central argument [3] about the decisive role of emotional experience. The quantitative measurement is also indicative: 70–80% of children who recognize and understand state symbols after a series of thematic events is a significantly higher indicator than can be expected from informational classes without active participation. A comparison of methods within our own practice shows that explanatory lessons ("let's talk about the flag") result in a significantly lower level of retention than action-based lessons ("let's do, sing, and play together"). Rozlutska

G. and Kurytsia V. [5] describe a similar effect through dramatization; in the proposed study, the same principle is confirmed by a wider range of forms - from active games to ritual celebrations.

3. Partnership with Families. The data from the parent survey adds a dimension to the picture that is not recorded in any of the studies analyzed: the transfer of cultural experience from the preschool to the family environment without special stimulation. Lutsenko I. [6] declares the need for partnership with the family and recommends purposefully involving parents.

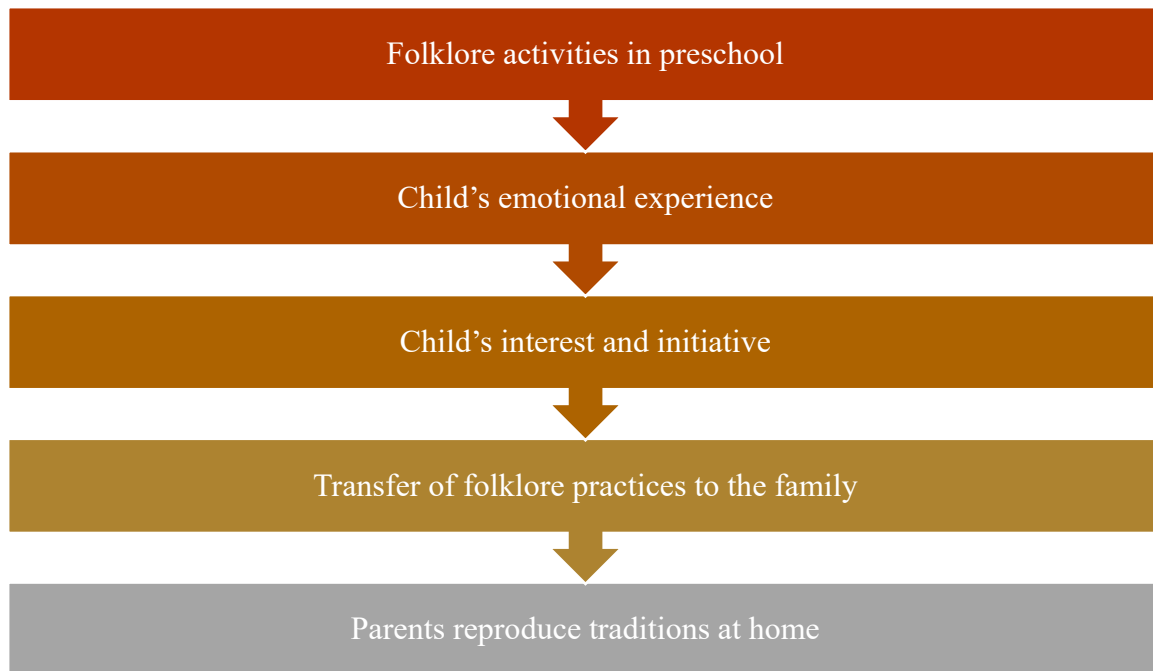


Figure 1. Transfer of folklore practices from preschool to the family environment

The results show that it is enough for the child to have a vivid personal experience at the institution: even parents who are not bearers of tradition themselves and do not actively initiate it begin to reproduce folk practices at home - at the request of their children. This indicates that the child can act as an agent of cultural transmission in the family, and not just a recipient from adults. This inverts the direction assumed in the literature, where the adult initiates and the child receives. The present observations suggest the reverse is possible and may be more reliable, as it is driven by the child's intrinsic motivation.

4. Adaptation of Displaced Children. The results regarding the adaptation of displaced children go beyond what is described in the analysed literature. The materials of the NAPN seminar [8] record the role of cultural practices in restoring security, but do not specify the mechanism. Observations in Lviv's early childhood education centres allow us to describe it more accurately: folk games lower the barrier to entry precisely because they do not require verbal contact at the initial stage. Children can join in through movement and imitation, even if they do not yet have the courage to talk to strangers. The recognizable melodic pattern of a carol or Kupala song signals: here is something I know. This mechanism-from recognition to security, from security to contact-is not described in any of the sources analyzed and is an original contribution of the proposed study.

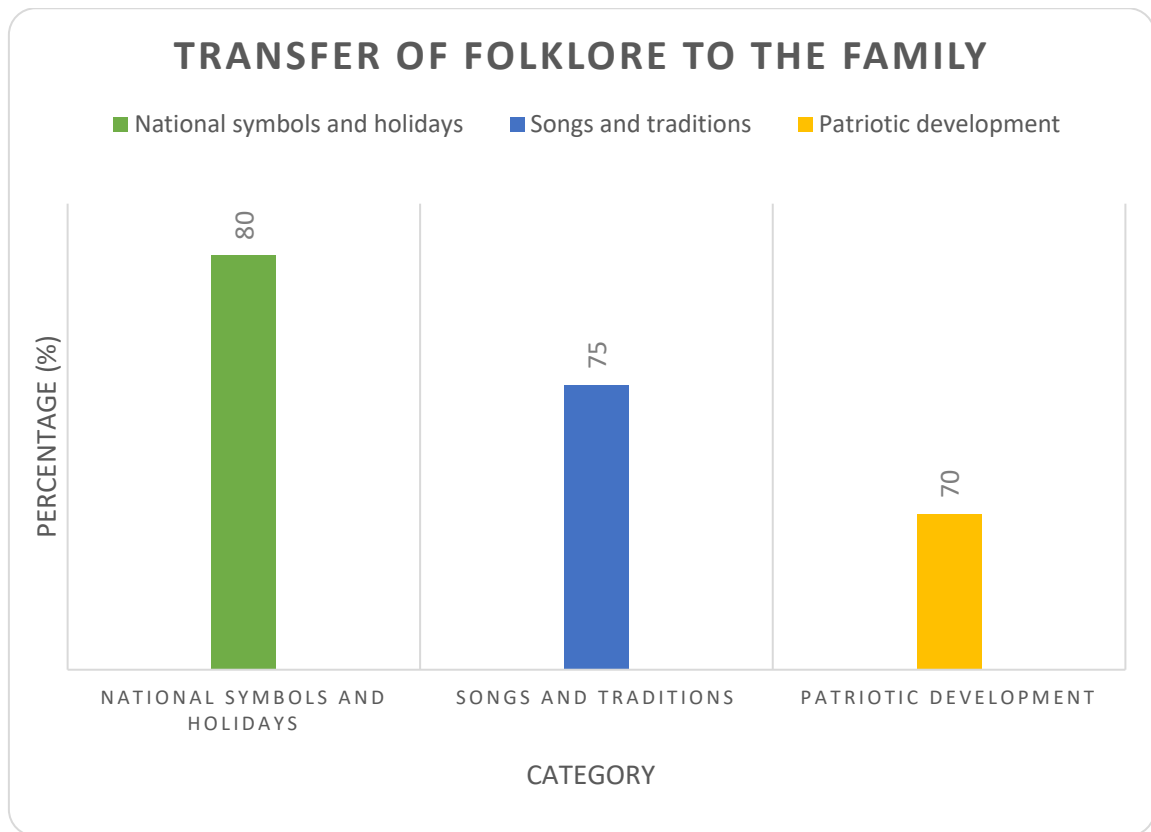


Figure 2. The recognition–security–contact mechanism in adaptation of displaced children

5. Age-Specific Perception of Folklore. A comparison of the two age groups clarifies the general provisions of Koval et al. [2] and Miskova N. M. [7] regarding the correspondence of folklore forms to preschool perception. Both sources describe this correspondence as a general feature of children's folklore, without differentiating it by subgroups. Observations reveal a significant qualitative difference: for children aged 4–5, the physical-play channel is not only effective but practically the only reliable way of learning.

In younger preschool groups, reflective discussions usually have limited effect. Children aged 4–5 are primarily engaged through movement, rhythm, and play. By the age of 5–6, many begin to compare situations and talk about the actions of characters, which makes it possible to include short discussions of fairy-tale events or elements of traditional rituals in folklore activities.

6. The Role of the Educator and Systematic Implementation. With regard to the methodological dimension - the role of the teacher and systematic implementation - the proposed study confirms the principle that is declared in practical literature but rarely supported by specific data: the effect of folklore work is much more pronounced when the entire teaching staff is involved. Data from the administration of Preschool No. 8 on the coverage of approximately 15–20 teachers by mentoring work illustrates that the methodological dissemination of the approach is not only expedient but also practically feasible on the scale of a real institution.

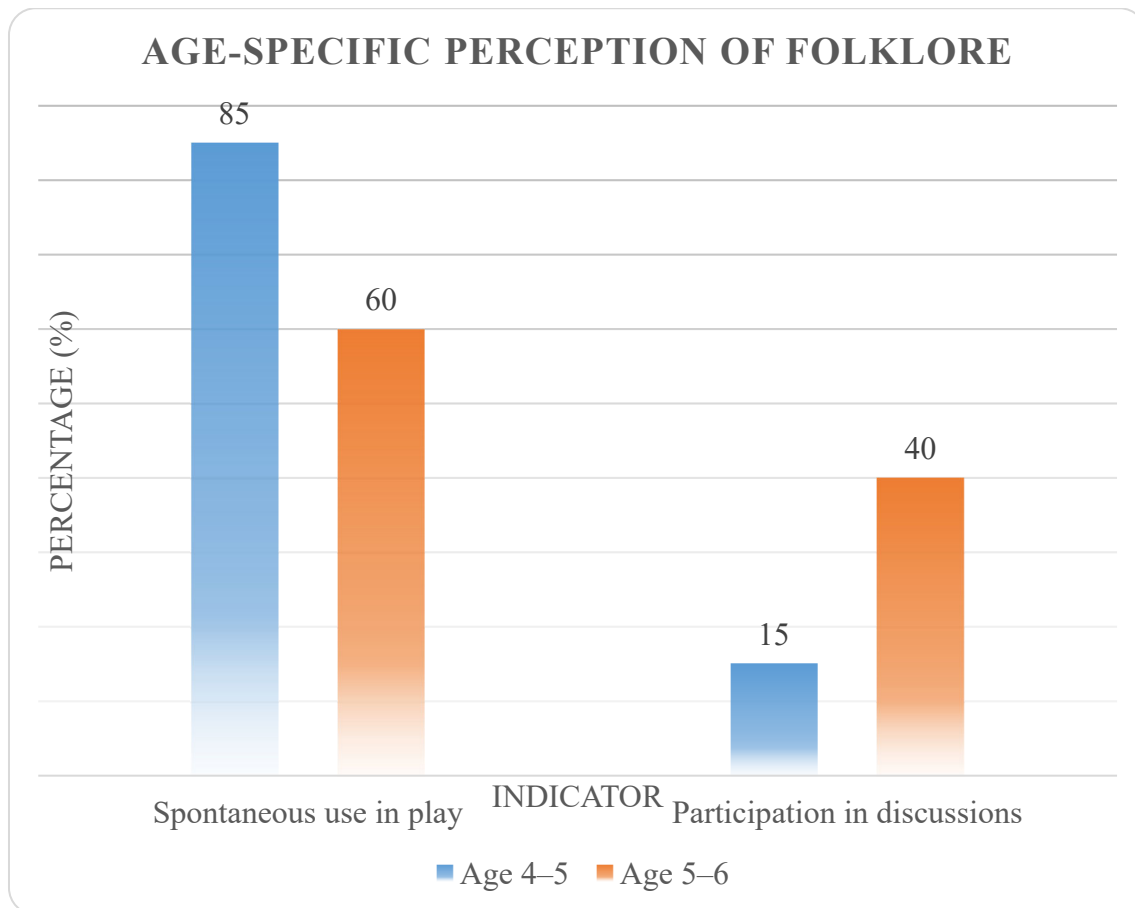


Figure 3. Age-specific perception of folklore in preschool groups

The limitations of the study are related to its methodological format. The absence of a control group and statistical data processing does not allow conclusions to be drawn about cause-and-effect relationships in a strictly scientific sense. The percentages obtained are descriptive indicators of practical observations, not measurement results with a defined margin of error. This limitation is typical for studies conducted in the natural conditions of educational activity. It does not devalue the results, but indicates the need to verify and expand them in subsequent studies using more rigorous methodological tools.

Висновки / Conclusions

In preschool education, folklore influences several aspects of child development at the same time, including language development, cultural identity, patriotic attitudes, and social adaptation. These effects become more consistent when folklore activities are used systematically in the preschool environment.

The cultural identity of a preschooler is formed not through the acquisition of knowledge about their native culture, but through the accumulation of repeated emotional experiences in various contexts: in songs, games, rituals, and joint activities. Patriotic feelings at this age are of the same nature: they are formed through direct experience, rather than through informational familiarization with state symbols. This challenges content-based approaches to patriotic education that prioritize factual knowledge over lived cultural experience.

In preschool education, folklore activities should take into account children's age characteristics. For children aged 4-5, movement-based games, rhymes, and musical activities are the most engaging. By the age of 5-6, children are ready for dramatization and simple discussions about stories and characters. The strongest effect is observed when elements introduced during structured activities later appear in free play or everyday communication.

Folklore can be considered an effective means of cultural adaptation, including for displaced children: recognizable folk forms restore a sense of security and cultural belonging

in a new environment. The effectiveness of this mechanism increases when the folklore component is included in the first days of adaptation.

The condition for the systemic effect of folklore work is the personal cultural involvement of the teacher and the dissemination of the approach to the entire staff of the institution through methodological work. A teacher who is a bearer of tradition, and not just its transmitter, achieves a qualitatively different educational result.

Further research is needed on the following topics:

- The development of standardized tools for assessing preschoolers' cultural identity
- The long-term effects of systematic folklore work on language readiness for school
- A comparative analysis of the effectiveness of the folklore approach in different regions and types of preschool educational institutions.

Список використаних джерел

1. Basic component of preschool education (State standard of preschool education). New edition: Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine dated January 12, 2021, No. 33. URL: <https://mon.gov.ua/ua/npa/pro-zatverdzhennya-bazovogo-komponenta-doshkilnoyi-osviti-derzhavnogo-standartu-doshkilnoyi-osviti-nova-redakciya>
2. Koval, T. V., Komarivska, N. O., & Kolesnik, K. A. Ukrainian children's folklore (materials for studying with preschool and primary school children): teaching manual. Vinnytsia: VDPU, 2024. 142 p. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.31652/398-053.2\(=161.2\)\(075.8\)-1-142](https://doi.org/10.31652/398-053.2(=161.2)(075.8)-1-142). URL: <https://dspace.vspu.edu.ua/items/183343f8-495e-44f3-a22d-bfc02d9033d6>
3. Zhuravko T. Patriotic education of older preschool children: theoretical aspect // Current issues in the humanities. 2020. Issue 28. Volume 1. P. 264–268. URL: https://www.aphn-journal.in.ua/archive/28_2020/part_1/43.pdf
4. Vatomanyuk, H. P. Ukrainian children's folklore as a means of speech development in preschool children // Collection of scientific works by young scientists of the Ivan Ohienko Kamianets-Podilskyi National University. Kamianets-Podilskyi, 2016. Issue 7. P. 99–100. URL: <http://elar.kpnu.edu.ua/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/667/Ватаманюк%20Г.%20P.%20Ukrainian%20children's%20folklore%20as%20a%20means%20of%20speech%20development%20in%20preschool%20children.pdf>
5. Rozlutska, H., Kurytsia, V. Formation of patriotic values in preschool children through theatricalization // NewInception. 2023. No. 1–2 (11–12). P. 39–46. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.58407/NI.23.1-2.3>. URL: <https://newinception.com.ua/index.php/newinception/article/view/109>
6. Lutsenko, I. Great love grows from small deeds: a modern approach to national-patriotic education of preschoolers // Preschool Education. 2023. No. 5. P. 3–7. URL: <https://jmil.com.ua/dv/2023-5>
7. Miskova N. M. Patriotic education of preschool children in preschool education institutions // Pedagogy of creative personality formation in higher and general education schools. 2020. No. 69. Volume 1. P. 102–105. URL: http://www.pedagogy-journal.kpu.zp.ua/archive/2020/69/part_1/22.pdf
8. National-patriotic education of children and youth in the conditions of martial law and post-war reconstruction of Ukraine: collection of abstracts of the methodological seminar (Kyiv, April 6, 2023). Ivano-Frankivsk: NAIR, 2023. 548 p. URL: <https://ipv.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Zb.-tez.-metod.-sem.-06.04.2023.pdf>
9. On certain issues of national-patriotic education in educational institutions of Ukraine and recognition of the order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine dated

- June 16, 2015, No. 641 as invalid: order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine dated June 6, 2022, No. 527. URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/v0527729-22>
10. On preschool education: Law of Ukraine dated June 6, 2024, No. 3788-IX. URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/3788-20>