WAYS OF DEVELOPING SPEECH PROFICIENCY THROUGH FOLK ORAL LITERATURE

A.S. Tolibaeva
4th-Year Student, Primary Education Program, University of Innovation Technologies (UIT)
https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20793584

Abstract. *This paper investigates the pedagogical potential of folk oral literature for developing speech proficiency among primary school learners, with particular emphasis on the minor genres of Karakalpak folklore. The study focuses on tongue twisters, proverbs, sayings, riddles, and short reflective forms as linguistically compressed cultural texts that can support articulation, vocabulary growth, fluency, memory, and communicative confidence. Special attention is given to the tongue-twister genre presented in the multi-volume collection Karakalpak Folklore, especially the phonetic model "Aq shaynekke kók qaqpaq, kók shaynekke aq qaqpaq." Through structural-stylistic analysis, comparative text interpretation, and pedagogical modelling, the paper demonstrates that oral folklore is not only a carrier of national spiritual heritage but also a practical resource for speech education. The findings indicate that tongue twisters train phonemic discrimination, regulate articulatory movement, and transform pronunciation practice into a motivating classroom activity. Riddles strengthen associative thinking and metaphorical reasoning, while proverbs and sayings cultivate concise, meaningful, and socially appropriate expression. The paper concludes that systematic integration of folk oral literature into primary education can improve speech culture, enrich children's linguistic experience, and preserve intangible cultural values in a modern learning environment.*

Keywords*: primary education, Karakalpak folklore, folk oral literature, minor folklore genres, tongue twisters, speech proficiency, articulation, spiritual heritage.*

INTRODUCTION

Speech proficiency is one of the central indicators of a child's intellectual, social, and emotional development. In primary education, the ability to pronounce sounds clearly, select appropriate words, organize thoughts coherently, and participate confidently in communication is not formed automatically. It develops through systematic practice, meaningful linguistic input, and culturally relevant interaction. For this reason, modern pedagogy increasingly recognizes that speech development should not be limited to mechanical pronunciation exercises or isolated vocabulary memorization. It should be connected with the child's cultural environment, imagination, memory, and emotional experience.

Folk oral literature provides a particularly valuable foundation for such an integrated approach. It represents the collective verbal creativity of the people and preserves their worldview, ethical principles, aesthetic preferences, and educational traditions. In the Karakalpak cultural context, oral genres such as proverbs, sayings, riddles, tongue twisters, songs, legends, and epics have historically functioned as both artistic texts and pedagogical tools. Through them, children learn not only words and sounds but also social meanings, moral norms, and models of expressive speech. The compactness and rhythmic organization of these genres make them especially suitable for primary school learners, whose attention span, memory capacity, and articulatory skills are still developing.

The structural and thematic diversity of Karakalpak verbal art reflects a complex system of cultural transmission. Short oral forms often contain condensed meanings that express centuries of community experience. A proverb may summarize an entire ethical position in one sentence; a riddle may encourage the child to interpret hidden relations between objects; a tongue twister may train difficult sounds through playful repetition. These genres show that traditional speech culture has always combined entertainment, instruction, and intellectual training. Their educational value lies in the fact that they activate the learner's mind and speech organs simultaneously.

In contemporary primary education, the use of folk oral literature is also important because it strengthens the connection between national heritage and modern educational objectives. Educational reforms in Uzbekistan emphasize the development of independent thinking, communicative competence, and respect for cultural identity. Folk genres respond to these aims because they create a natural learning environment where speech exercises become meaningful and emotionally engaging. They help pupils move from passive listening to active speaking, from memorized phrases to creative expression, and from individual pronunciation practice to collaborative communication.

The present paper examines ways of developing speech proficiency through folk oral literature by focusing on minor genres of Karakalpak folklore. Particular attention is paid to tongue twisters because they directly influence articulation, phonetic accuracy, fluency, and vocal flexibility. At the same time, the study considers proverbs, sayings, riddles, and short reflective forms as supporting genres that develop vocabulary, logical thinking, expressive concision, and moral awareness. The main purpose of the paper is to show how these oral forms can be interpreted and applied as practical speech-development resources in primary education.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Research on Karakalpak folklore has emphasized the richness of oral genres and their connection with the historical life, language, and worldview of the Karakalpak people. Mambetov (2014) presents folklore as a living field of cultural memory, while Ayimbetov (2018) highlights the didactic and moral value of folk proverbs and sayings. Maqsetov (2012) discusses oral folk literature as a broad artistic system in which each genre performs a specific communicative and social function. The multi-volume edition Karakalpak Folklore (2015) provides an important textual basis for studying the minor forms of oral creativity, including tongue twisters and other short genres used in everyday verbal practice.

The linguistic dimension of the topic is supported by studies of the Karakalpak language. Baskakov (2004) describes the phonetic and structural characteristics of the language, including sound patterns that are significant for pronunciation and articulation. Abdinazimov (2018) further explains the phonetics and lexicology of modern Karakalpak, demonstrating that sound harmony, consonant alternation, and lexical formation play an important role in the expressive capacity of the language. These linguistic features are especially relevant when tongue twisters are examined as pedagogical texts because they intentionally concentrate difficult sound combinations in short rhythmic structures.

From an educational perspective, folk oral literature can be understood as an ethnopedagogical resource. Ethnopedagogy studies the traditional ways in which communities educate children through stories, rituals, games, songs, and oral wisdom. Unlike formal textbook exercises, folk texts emerge from the living speech of the people and therefore carry natural rhythm, emotional warmth, and cultural familiarity. When a child recites a tongue twister, solves a riddle, or explains a proverb, the child participates in a cultural practice that has been transmitted

across generations. This participation increases motivation and gives speech practice a meaningful social purpose.

Speech proficiency itself is a multidimensional construct. It includes phonetic accuracy, lexical richness, grammatical organization, semantic clarity, pragmatic appropriateness, and fluency. In primary school, these components develop unevenly. Some pupils may know many words but pronounce them unclearly; others may pronounce sounds correctly but hesitate in connected speech; still others may speak fluently but lack expressive variety. Folk oral literature can address these different aspects because its genres are functionally diverse. Tongue twisters train articulation, riddles develop semantic interpretation, proverbs teach concise formulation, and epic or narrative fragments support expressive intonation and coherent storytelling.

The theoretical basis of this paper therefore combines linguistic, literary, psychological, and pedagogical perspectives. Linguistically, it examines sound patterns and lexical structures. Literarily, it interprets the genre features and artistic devices of oral texts. Psychologically, it considers memory, attention, association, and the playful nature of learning. Pedagogically, it evaluates how oral texts can be transformed into classroom activities that improve children's speech culture. This interdisciplinary approach makes it possible to view folk oral literature not only as an object of preservation but also as a dynamic instrument of speech education.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study uses a qualitative research design based on structural-stylistic analysis, comparative text interpretation, and pedagogical modelling. The main textual material consists of selected minor genres of Karakalpak oral folk literature, with particular attention to tongue twisters documented in the multi-volume collection Karakalpak Folklore. The paper also draws on scholarly works concerning Karakalpak folklore, proverbs, oral literature, and the phonetic structure of the Karakalpak language. These sources provide the literary and linguistic basis for interpreting the educational function of the selected genres.

Structural-stylistic analysis was used to examine how short oral texts are organized. This method focuses on repetition, rhythm, phonemic concentration, semantic inversion, parallelism, and syntactic balance. In the case of tongue twisters, the analysis identified the sound combinations that create articulatory difficulty and pedagogical value. In proverbs and sayings, attention was given to semantic compression, antithesis, metaphor, and moral generalization. In riddles, the study considered the relationship between hidden meaning, descriptive clues, and associative thinking.

Comparative text interpretation was used to distinguish the speech-development functions of different minor genres. The study compared tongue twisters, riddles, proverbs, and reflective oral forms according to their dominant pedagogical effect. For example, tongue twisters primarily influence articulation and fluency, while riddles strengthen logical reasoning and vocabulary activation. Proverbs and sayings develop concise expression and social meaning. This comparison made it possible to construct a functional model of how folk oral literature contributes to speech proficiency.

Pedagogical modelling was used to transform the textual analysis into classroom-oriented recommendations. The study considered how teachers can use oral genres during warm-up activities, pronunciation practice, vocabulary lessons, storytelling tasks, group competitions, and reflective discussions. The target learners are primary school pupils whose speech development requires engaging, age-appropriate, and culturally familiar materials. The suggested activities are

designed to reduce anxiety, increase participation, and create a bridge between traditional oral culture and modern communicative teaching methods.

The study is limited by its primarily theoretical and analytical nature. It does not present a large-scale experimental measurement of pupils' speech improvement. However, it offers a systematic framework for future empirical research and provides practical directions for teachers. The value of the study lies in connecting textual analysis with pedagogical application, thereby demonstrating that folklore can serve not only as literary heritage but also as an effective instrument for developing children's speech proficiency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis shows that each minor genre of Karakalpak folk oral literature performs a distinct function in the development of children's speech. These genres should not be treated as interchangeable decorative materials. Their structures are different, and therefore their educational effects are different. When teachers understand the specific function of each genre, they can use folklore more purposefully in the classroom. The most important contribution of minor folklore genres is that they unite sound, meaning, emotion, and social experience in short, memorable forms.

Proverbs and sayings are especially useful for developing meaningful and concise speech. They teach pupils how to express a complete idea in a short statement. Because proverbs usually contain moral, practical, or social lessons, they encourage children to connect language with life experience. In the classroom, a teacher can ask pupils to explain the meaning of a proverb, find a real-life situation that illustrates it, or create a short dialogue based on it. Such tasks develop vocabulary, interpretation, reasoning, and pragmatic awareness. Pupils learn not only to repeat a sentence but also to understand when and why it can be used.

Riddles contribute to speech proficiency by stimulating associative thinking and lexical search. A riddle requires the learner to listen carefully, identify semantic clues, compare objects, and formulate an answer. This process activates memory and vocabulary more deeply than simple repetition. Riddles also develop metaphorical thinking because they often describe an object indirectly. When pupils discuss possible answers, they practice argumentation, turn-taking, and explanatory speech. Thus, riddles are effective for connecting cognitive development with oral communication.

Short reflective forms, including termes and moral reflections, have a different function. They develop intonation, emotional expression, and value-oriented speech. Their rhythm and elevated tone help pupils experience the aesthetic dimension of language. When children recite such texts, they learn to control voice, pause, stress, and emotional coloring. These elements are important because speech proficiency is not only a matter of correct pronunciation but also of expressive delivery. A pupil who speaks clearly but monotonously still lacks full communicative competence.

Tongue twisters are the most direct tools for improving articulation and fluency. They concentrate difficult sound patterns in a playful verbal form. Their pedagogical strength lies in the fact that they transform pronunciation practice into a game. Children usually enjoy repeating them faster, competing with classmates, and correcting each other's mistakes. This playful environment lowers psychological pressure and increases the number of repetitions, which is necessary for developing stable articulatory habits.

Phonetic and Pedagogical Analysis of a Tongue Twister

A representative example is the tongue twister “Aq shaynekke kók qaqpaq, kók shaynekke aq qaqpaq.” This short text has a high pedagogical value because it combines phonetic contrast, lexical repetition, color inversion, and rhythmic symmetry. The words “aq” and “kók” create semantic opposition through color terms, while “shaynekke” and “qaqpaq” create a rapid movement between velar and uvular consonantal patterns. The learner must coordinate the tongue, soft palate, airflow, and rhythm in a very short sequence.

From a phonetic perspective, the most important feature is the alternation of /q/ and /k/. These sounds require different places of articulation, and pupils who are still developing phonemic precision may confuse them or pronounce them weakly. The tongue twister forces the speaker to shift quickly between these articulatory positions. This strengthens oral motor control and improves the ability to differentiate similar sounds. In addition, the repeated syllabic structure supports rhythm and helps pupils maintain a stable tempo.

The semantic structure is equally significant. The inversion of “white teapot-blue lid” and “blue teapot-white lid” prevents automatic recitation. The child cannot simply repeat sounds mechanically; attention must be given to the changing order of color and object. This means that the tongue twister activates both speech organs and cognitive control. The pupil must remember the structure, process the contrast, and pronounce the sequence accurately. For this reason, tongue twisters are useful not only for articulation but also for attention, working memory, and verbal flexibility.

Table 1. Functional analysis of the tongue-twister model

Analytical oral sample	**Specific phonetic focus**	**Primary pedagogical influence**
Aq shaynekke kók qaqpaq, kók shaynekke aq qaqpaq	Systematic alternation of /q/ and /k/ consonant structures; repeated movement between back consonants and vowel sequences.	Corrects speech defects, regulates airflow, develops articulatory flexibility, and improves oral fluency.
Color inversion: aq-kók / kók-aq	Semantic reversal combined with rhythmic repetition and parallel syntax.	Prevents passive memorization, strengthens attention, and trains rapid cognitive switching during speech.
Vowel and rhythm harmony	Internal sound balance, syllabic symmetry, and tempo control.	Internalizes natural language rhythm, increases phonetic precision, and supports confident public recitation.

This analysis confirms that tongue twisters are not random combinations of difficult words. They are carefully organized oral mechanisms that train speech through repetition, rhythm, and sound contrast. Their abstract content is not a weakness; rather, it is one of their strengths. Because the main purpose is phonetic practice, the text does not need a complex plot or detailed description. Its value is found in the concentration of sounds and the challenge of accurate performance.

In primary education, tongue twisters can be used in several stages. First, the teacher pronounces the text slowly and clearly, drawing attention to the difficult sounds. Second, pupils

repeat the text collectively, which reduces fear of mistakes. Third, individual pupils pronounce it at a moderate speed, focusing on accuracy rather than speed. Fourth, the class may organize a friendly eloquence competition in which pupils try to recite the text clearly and rhythmically. Finally, the teacher may ask pupils to create similar short phrases with the same sounds. This sequence moves from imitation to independent speech production.

The classroom value of folklore also depends on the teacher's ability to connect oral genres with broader speech objectives. For instance, after practicing a tongue twister, the teacher can introduce words with the same sounds from the textbook. After solving a riddle, pupils can describe the object in their own words. After discussing a proverb, pupils can create a short story or dialogue. In this way, folklore becomes part of an integrated speech lesson rather than an isolated cultural ornament.

The analysis identifies four major variables that influence child speech development through folklore: linguistic, literary, social, and environmental variables. The linguistic variable includes sounds, words, grammar, and rhythm. The literary variable includes imagery, genre, style, and artistic structure. The social variable includes family communication, peer interaction, classroom participation, and cultural identity. The environmental variable includes the availability of books, oral storytelling traditions, teacher competence, and school support. Among these, the social and literary variables are especially influential because children learn speech most effectively when language is meaningful, shared, and emotionally engaging.

Folk oral literature also supports inclusive learning. Some pupils may struggle with formal textbook exercises but participate actively in games, riddles, or recitation tasks. Oral genres give such learners an alternative path into language practice. Because many folklore texts are short and memorable, they can be repeated frequently without causing fatigue. Their musicality and humor make them accessible even to pupils with low confidence. At the same time, more advanced pupils can be challenged to interpret deeper meanings, compare variants, or compose their own examples.

Another important result is the role of folklore in developing speech culture. Speech culture includes politeness, clarity, expressiveness, respect for listeners, and appropriate use of language in social situations. Proverbs and sayings are particularly useful in this regard because they teach children how language can express wisdom, caution, praise, criticism, and moral evaluation. Riddles teach pupils to listen attentively and think before answering. Tongue twisters teach patience, self-correction, and careful pronunciation. Together, these genres cultivate a disciplined and aesthetically sensitive attitude toward speech.

The modern relevance of folk oral literature should therefore not be underestimated. In the age of digital communication, children are exposed to fast, fragmented, and often informal language. While digital tools can be useful, they do not always develop clear articulation, careful listening, or culturally rooted expression. Folk oral genres offer a necessary balance because they require oral performance, memory, attention, and face-to-face interaction. They return speech to its social and human context, where the voice, listener, rhythm, and meaning are all important.

PRACTICAL WAYS OF DEVELOPING SPEECH PROFICIENCY THROUGH FOLK ORAL LITERATURE

The effective use of folk oral literature in primary education requires a systematic method. Teachers should select texts according to age, linguistic difficulty, lesson objectives, and cultural relevance. A tongue twister with complex consonant clusters may be suitable for pronunciation practice, while a proverb may be better for a moral discussion or a speaking task. A riddle may be

used at the beginning of a lesson to activate curiosity, whereas a short narrative or epic fragment may be used to develop expressive reading and storytelling.

One practical method is the “listen-repeat-explain-use” sequence. In the first stage, pupils listen to the folklore text and observe the teacher’s pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm. In the second stage, they repeat the text several times, first together and then individually. In the third stage, they explain the meaning, identify difficult words, or discuss the situation in which the expression can be used. In the fourth stage, they use the text creatively by making a dialogue, drawing a picture, writing a short sentence, or creating a new version. This method develops both form and meaning.

Another effective method is the organization of eloquence competitions. Such competitions should not be limited to speed. The criteria should include clarity, correct pronunciation, rhythm, intonation, confidence, and expressiveness. Pupils can work in pairs or groups before performing individually. This approach creates a positive competitive atmosphere and encourages repeated practice. It also helps children overcome shyness and develop public speaking skills. When competitions are conducted respectfully, they strengthen motivation and peer support.

Teachers can also use folklore for vocabulary development. Many oral texts contain traditional words, culturally specific objects, and expressive phrases that may not appear frequently in modern textbooks. When these words are explained through pictures, actions, and examples, pupils expand their lexical knowledge and become more familiar with the cultural environment of the language. However, vocabulary work should not overload learners. The teacher should select a small number of key words and connect them with speaking activities.

Folklore-based speech development can be integrated with other subjects as well. Riddles about animals, plants, seasons, and household objects can be connected with natural science. Proverbs about work, friendship, respect, and honesty can be connected with moral education. Tongue twisters can be used in language lessons and extracurricular clubs. This cross-curricular use increases the value of folklore and shows pupils that language is not isolated from life.

For assessment, teachers may use simple observation criteria. These criteria can include accurate pronunciation of target sounds, ability to repeat the text without major pauses, understanding of meaning, use of new vocabulary, participation in group discussion, and confidence during performance. Such assessment should be formative rather than punitive. The aim is to guide improvement, not to embarrass pupils. Since speech development requires time, pupils should be encouraged to compare their progress with their own previous performance rather than with the strongest speakers in the class.

Table 2. Pedagogical functions of selected minor folklore genres

Genre	Main speech focus	Classroom activity	Expected result
Tongue twister	Articulation, rhythm, fluency	Choral repetition, individual recitation, eloquence competition	Clearer pronunciation and stronger control of difficult sounds
Riddle	Vocabulary, logic, explanation	Guessing game, clue analysis, oral justification	Improved semantic thinking and active word retrieval

Proverb or saying	Concise expression, pragmatic meaning	Explanation, dialogue, short story based on the proverb	More meaningful and socially appropriate speech
Reflective oral form	Intonation, emotion, moral expression	Expressive reading, discussion, memorized recitation	Greater confidence, voice control, and moral awareness

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study have several implications for primary education. First, folk oral literature should be included in speech-development activities not only during literature lessons but also during language practice, extracurricular clubs, and communicative exercises. Its use should be planned according to specific learning outcomes. If the objective is pronunciation, tongue twisters are appropriate. If the objective is reasoning and vocabulary, riddles are effective. If the objective is meaningful expression, proverbs and sayings are useful.

Second, teacher preparation is essential. Teachers need to understand the linguistic structure of the selected texts and the possible difficulties pupils may face. For example, when using a tongue twister based on /q/ and /k/, the teacher should demonstrate the difference between the sounds and provide slow practice before asking pupils to speak quickly. Without such guidance, children may simply repeat mistakes. Therefore, folklore-based teaching should combine cultural sensitivity with phonetic and methodological awareness.

Third, the use of folklore supports the preservation of intangible cultural heritage. When children learn traditional oral texts in school, they become active participants in cultural transmission. This does not mean that education should remain in the past. On the contrary, folklore can be modernized through creative tasks, digital recordings, classroom performances, illustrated cards, and student-created collections. The important point is that modernization should not remove the cultural meaning of the texts.

Fourth, family participation can strengthen the results. Parents and grandparents often know oral texts that are not recorded in textbooks. Teachers can ask pupils to collect a proverb, riddle, or tongue twister from family members and present it in class. This activity develops speech, strengthens intergenerational communication, and enriches the school's folklore materials. It also shows children that knowledge exists not only in books but also in the living memory of the community.

Finally, future research should include experimental studies that measure the effect of folklore-based activities on pronunciation accuracy, vocabulary growth, fluency, and speaking confidence. Such studies may compare classes that use regular textbook exercises with classes that integrate folk oral literature systematically. Pre-test and post-test designs, teacher observation, audio recording, and pupil interviews would provide stronger empirical evidence. Nevertheless, the present theoretical analysis already demonstrates the educational logic of using minor folklore genres for speech development.

CONCLUSION

Developing speech proficiency among primary school pupils is a complex pedagogical task that requires attention to pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, meaning, expression, and confidence. Folk oral literature offers a powerful resource for this task because it combines linguistic practice with cultural meaning and emotional engagement. The minor genres of Karakalpak folklore,

especially tongue twisters, riddles, proverbs, sayings, and reflective oral forms, provide practical models for training different aspects of speech.

The analysis of the tongue twister “Aq shaynekke kók qaqpaq, kók shaynekke aq qaqpaq” demonstrates how a short oral text can train articulatory precision, phonemic discrimination, rhythm, attention, and memory. Its phonetic structure requires the learner to alternate difficult sounds, while its semantic inversion prevents passive repetition. This confirms that tongue twisters are valuable traditional speech exercises with contemporary pedagogical relevance.

The broader discussion shows that each folklore genre contributes to speech development in a specific way. Proverbs and sayings cultivate concise and meaningful expression; riddles stimulate vocabulary activation and logical reasoning; reflective forms develop intonation and emotional delivery; tongue twisters strengthen pronunciation and fluency. When these genres are integrated systematically into classroom practice, they support communicative competence and preserve national spiritual heritage.

Therefore, the development of speech proficiency through folk oral literature should be viewed as both an educational and cultural priority. It helps pupils speak more clearly, think more actively, and participate more confidently in communication. At the same time, it ensures that the language, wisdom, and aesthetic traditions of the people continue to live in the speech of younger generations.

REFERENCES

1. Abdinazimov, Sh. (2018). Modern Karakalpak literary language: Phonetics and lexicology. Tashkent: Sano-Standart Publishing House.
2. Ayimbetov, Q. (2018). Karakalpak folk proverbs and sayings. Nukus: Bilim Publishing House.
3. Baskakov, N. A. (2004). The Karakalpak language (Vol. 1). Nukus: Karakalpakstan Publishing House.
4. Karakalpak Folklore: Multi-volume edition. (2015). Nukus: Ilim Publishing House.
5. Mambetov, J. (2014). Karakalpak folkloristics. Nukus: Bilim Publishing House.
6. Maqsetov, Q. (2012). Karakalpak oral folk literature. Nukus: Ilim Publishing House.