

**PRINCIPLES OF CLASSIFYING UZBEK CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE**

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**Annotation:** This article provides a systematic analysis of the scientific approaches to the classification of Uzbek children's folklore genres, particularly based on the views of the folklorist Oxunjon Safarov. Through a comparative approach, the study examines classifications proposed in world folklore studies by G. Vinogradov, O. Kapitsa, M. Melnikov, N. Isenbet and in Uzbek folklore studies by G'. Jahongirov. Based on this comparative perspective, Safarov's classification is divided into three main groups, and the structural components of each group are analyzed in detail. The advantages, shortcomings, and innovative aspects of the system proposed by Safarov are objectively evaluated, and the methodological foundations of scholarly research conducted on children's folklore are elucidated.

**Keywords:** classification, genre, type, caressing songs, children's calendar, game, song, satire, humor.

In world folklore studies, the classification of children's folklore has been carried out by scholars such as G. Vinogradov, O. Kapitsa, M. Melnikov, N. Isenbet, N. Beyeshu, R. N. Xashba, M. O'zhan, E. Taker, and in Uzbek folklore studies by G'. Jahongirov.

Oxunjon Safarov carefully examined all classifications related to Russian, Tatar, Moldovan, Dagestani, Abkhaz, and Tajik children's folklore, analyzing their common and distinctive features in comparison with Uzbek children's oral poetic творчество.

Based on these observations, existing classifications, and nearly half a century of collected materials on Uzbek children's folklore, Safarov proposed studying them within three major groups:

**1. Caressing (Affectionate) Songs**

This group includes lullabies (alla), blessing songs (aytim-olqish), soothing rhymes (ovutmachochlar), endearment songs (erkalama), and entertaining rhymes (qiziqmachochlar), all united by the motif of affection.

The scholar divides caressing poetry into two subgroups according to purpose, context, and the child's age:

- Cradle songs – including lullabies and ethnographic blessing songs (performed up to the age of three).
- Affection songs – including erkalama, ovutmachochlar, qiziqmachochlar, and qaytarmachochlar (performed up to the age of six or seven).

**2. Children's Calendar and Ritual Songs**

In this group, adults actively participate in shaping children's attitudes toward nature. These songs are associated with the seasons—spring, summer, autumn, and winter. Some of them historically passed from adult repertoire into children's repertoire due to socio-political developments. Additionally, genres such as yalinqoch and hukmlagich, originally formed on the basis of animistic and totemistic beliefs of ancient ancestors and later losing their original meaning, have been preserved in children's folklore.

**3. Songs and Games Created and Performed by Children**

This category forms the core of Uzbek children's folklore. According to the participation of word and movement, it is divided into two major groups:

- a) Children's everyday (domestic) songs;
- b) Children's game folklore.

This classification was presented in Safarov's 2007 textbook for higher education institutions. His principal theoretical views on children's folklore were fully articulated earlier in his doctoral dissertation (1985), titled "*The Genre Structure and Poetics of Uzbek Children's Folklore*," later published as a monograph.

In the dissertation, children's performance folklore was divided into four groups:

1. Songs connected with game components (chorlama, cheklashmachoq, guldur-gup, counting rhymes, game songs, and dispersal songs).
2. Word-games (tongue twisters, riddles, chandish).
3. Songs (various forms such as qiqillama, two-line, three-line, and four-line songs).
4. Humorous and satirical songs of children.

In this version, the internal types of games and songs were separately numbered. However, the third category titled "Songs" appears overly general, as humorous and satirical songs could also be included within it, yet they are separately classified as the fourth group. A more methodologically consistent approach might have been to divide children's performance folklore initially into two large groups—games and songs—and then present their internal structures.

In our view, the later classification (2007) is more concise and accessible, presenting the structure of children's folklore according to the principles of compactness and clarity. Moreover, the replacement of "dispersal songs" with the single-term *tarqalmachoq* and the inclusion of the new genre *qaytarmachoq* within affection songs are noteworthy innovations.

It is evident that Oxunjon Safarov was continuously engaged in research aimed at discovering new dimensions of children's folklore studies and further developing this field.

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