

**THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING
VOCAL-PERFORMANCE COMPETENCE IN FUTURE MUSIC TEACHERS
THROUGH CHILDREN'S SONGS**

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Abstract: This article provides an in-depth analysis of the theoretical and methodological foundations for developing vocal-performance competence in future music teachers through the process of learning children's songs. Children's songs, with their simple melodic structure, rhythmic simplicity, and emotional richness, enable the simultaneous formation of students' vocal technique, musical hearing, intonation accuracy, emotional expressiveness, and pedagogical approach skills. The article extensively covers psychological-pedagogical theories (Vygotsky, Piaget, Gardner, and others), foreign and national experiences, as well as modern concepts of music education. The proposed approach can serve as an effective tool for improving the quality of higher music-pedagogical education.

Keywords: children's songs, vocal-performance competence, music education theory, psychological foundations, Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory, musical intelligence, emotional development, pedagogical methodology, future teachers.

Introduction

In contemporary higher music education, the practical performance and pedagogical skills of future teachers are of paramount importance, alongside theoretical knowledge. Vocal-performance competence serves as a fundamental tool for students in their future work teaching music to children. Children's songs represent a unique material for developing this competence, as their simple structure allows for the simultaneous mastery of technical and artistic aspects.

The main objective of the article is to provide a comprehensive overview of the theoretical foundations for improving vocal-performance competence based on learning children's songs and to offer practical methodological recommendations grounded in these foundations.

Theoretical Foundations

The theoretical basis for developing vocal performance through children's songs emerges at the intersection of several disciplines: psychology, pedagogy, music psychology, and vocal pedagogy. Below, the key theoretical directions are examined in detail.

1. Psychological Foundations: Children's Psyche and Musical Development

Children's songs serve as an effective psychological material because they align with children's age characteristics and, for adults (university students), function through a regressive method (re-activating childhood experiences).

L.S. Vygotsky's Cultural-Historical Theory Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) emphasized that higher mental functions (voluntary attention, memory, thinking, emotional regulation) develop through socio-cultural interactions. Singing, particularly in a group, constitutes a form of social activity. When students sing together, they operate within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD): with guidance from the teacher or more capable peers, they master new vocal skills. The simplicity of children's songs allows students to quickly demonstrate and expand their “potential level of development.” Through self-assessment and peer feedback, they become more independent performers. In music education contexts, the ZPD supports scaffolded learning in choral or vocal activities, where peers act as “More Knowledgeable Others” to bridge gaps in skills such as pitch accuracy or expressive phrasing.



Jean Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development Piaget described cognitive development in four stages, with children's songs aligning particularly well with the preoperational (2–7 years) and concrete operational (7–11 years) stages. These stages feature simple, repetitive rhythms and melodies that match children's symbolic thinking and emerging logical operations. When future teachers learn and teach such songs, they gain insight into children's cognitive features (e.g., egocentrism, centration) and adapt their vocal technique accordingly—emphasizing clear intonation, steady rhythm, and concrete associations. This process helps students understand how musical activities support cognitive growth in young learners, such as linking rhythms to motor skills or symbolic play.

Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences Gardner identifies musical intelligence as one of at least eight distinct intelligences, involving the ability to perceive, produce, and appreciate pitch, rhythm, timbre, and musical patterns. Children's songs actively develop musical intelligence (e.g., recognizing tones and rhythms) while simultaneously engaging emotional (intrapersonal) intelligence and interpersonal intelligence (group interaction and communication). For future teachers, this process broadens their understanding of their own musical abilities in a holistic context, fostering appreciation for music's role in overall human development. Gardner's framework underscores that musical activities deserve dedicated instructional time, as they cultivate a unique form of intelligence rather than merely supporting others.

2. Vocal Pedagogy Theory

Foreign literature (e.g., works on “Music and the Child” and vocal perspectives in children's singing) extensively discusses differences between children's and adults' voices. Children's songs typically feature a narrow range (a fifth or sixth interval), helping students find balance between head voice and chest voice registers. Methods such as rote learning (ear-based), rote-note (combined with notation), and note-based approaches are most suitable for children's repertoire.

Uzbek scholars (M. Atajanova, S. Nazarov, and others) highlight the importance of national folklore in teaching children's music. Uzbek folk children's songs (“Alla,” “Qizil olma,” “Laylak”) are rich in rhythm and intonation, shaping students' national musical thinking and cultural awareness. Vocal training through these songs builds healthy technique, breath support, and resonance suitable for future pedagogical work with children.

3. Pedagogical Competence Theory

The competence of a future teacher encompasses not only performance but also pedagogical approaches. Through children's songs, students acquire skills in:

Selecting age-appropriate repertoire based on children's developmental characteristics;

Step-by-step teaching of songs (listening → repetition → adding movement → expressive performance);

Combining group performance with individualized instruction.

The Republic of Uzbekistan's “Concept for the Development of Music Education” particularly emphasizes the role of national and children's music in education, aligning with inclusive and culturally relevant teaching practices.

4. Foundations of Emotional and Social Development

Singing develops emotional expressiveness. When students perform children's songs with varied emotions (joy, tenderness, playfulness), they expand their emotional palette and learn to convey these feelings to children in the future. Group singing fosters social bonds, empathy, and collaborative skills—essential for classroom management and creating positive learning environments.

Conclusion

The above theoretical foundations demonstrate the scientifically robust nature of developing vocal-performance competence through children's songs. This approach, grounded in



psychological theories (Vygotsky, Piaget, Gardner), pedagogical principles, and national traditions, comprehensively prepares future music teachers. Subsequent sections can explore practical methodologies and empirical results based on this theoretical framework.

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