

# The Educational Significance of Proverbs and Riddles in Primary Education

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**Received:** 30 April 2025; **Accepted:** 28 May 2025; **Published:** 30 June 2025

**Abstract:** This paper explores the educational significance of proverbs and riddles in primary education. Proverbs and riddles, as integral parts of oral folk literature, play a vital role in shaping children's language skills, cultural awareness, and critical thinking abilities. The use of these traditional forms in the classroom not only enhances vocabulary and comprehension but also fosters creativity, problem-solving, and moral development. By integrating proverbs and riddles into the curriculum, educators can create an engaging and culturally relevant learning environment that supports holistic child development. The study emphasizes the value of these linguistic tools in promoting active participation, memory retention, and social interaction among young learners.

**Keywords:** Proverbs, Riddles, Primary Education, Language Development, Cultural Awareness, Critical Thinking, Moral Education, Folk Literature, Classroom Activities, Holistic Learning.

**Introduction:** The role of education and upbringing based on the noble traditions of our people is boundless in the comprehensive development of future generations. In our daily interactions and speech, each of us—whether knowingly or unknowingly—uses numerous wise sayings, proverbs with astonishing depth of meaning, and expressions polished through centuries of reverence. The profound ideas embedded in these wisdom-filled ancestral values have always contributed to the perfection of each generation and continue to retain their true essence even today. From the very first day a child is born, our kind-hearted grandmothers convey their love into the hearts of their dear ones through blessings and chants imbued with goodness, lullabies, playful rhymes, and soothing verses. This is no coincidence: from the stage of individual formation to the maturity of personality, feelings of courage, bravery, and patriotism are instilled into a child's consciousness through lullabies. Considering that the core of our national mentality is formed by the artistic thinking of the people—which has played a significant role in the formation and advancement of the spiritual culture of Eastern nations—it is essential to emphasize that the earliest pedagogical upbringing within the family is transmitted through these very genres, serving as a

vital foundation for the development of artistic and aesthetic perception from childhood. All genres of Uzbek folklore possess great educational potential. In particular, proverbs and riddles—being among the most concise forms of oral folk art—contain numerous elements of enlightenment and educational value.

It is well known that proverbs have long been regarded as an important educational tool in folk pedagogy. Proverbs serve as a powerful means of shaping spiritual worldview, enriching verbal expression, and conveying thoughts in a compelling manner. In particular, the use of proverbs holds significant importance in developing speech, promoting literacy, and fostering creative thinking among primary school students. Through the use of proverbs, students develop a deeper interest in the subject matter being taught. Their cognitive capacity expands, and they begin to engage in logical reasoning. This, in turn, contributes to making the lesson more effective and engaging.

In each section of the Reading Textbook for primary school students, samples of oral folk literature—particularly proverbs—are included. These proverbs can be effectively utilized at any stage of a lesson, whether in presenting new material, explaining a new topic, or during the reinforcement phase. Moreover, during subjects such as the native language,

mathematics, or ethics (etiquette studies), proverbs can be beneficially applied during group activities, especially when dividing students into groups or encouraging them to recite and sort proverbs. Such practices stimulate quick thinking and promote speech development. In mathematics lessons, especially when teaching first-grade students topics related to counting numbers, proverbs can serve as a means of nationalizing mathematical education. For example, widely used proverbs such as "Two fifteens make one thirty," "Do not say eight without counting," or "Measure seven times, cut once" can be adapted into problem or exercise formats. Expressing simple exercises through proverbs aids better retention in students' memory. Alternatively, the first part of a well-known proverb can be given as a prompt, and students may be tasked with completing the second part as a creative exercise. As a result, students' creative thinking and oral speech develop, and they begin to form the skills to speak fluently, correctly, and expressively in their native language.

The use of riddles in the educational and instructional process also proves to be highly effective. As noted by scholars, "Riddles accompany a person throughout their life—from the family and school environment to public settings—enhancing their knowledge, strengthening their intellect, and enriching them spiritually and aesthetically" [2, p. 6]. Uzbek folk riddles play a significant role in the upbringing of the younger generation. In particular, in classroom activities aimed at providing moral and ethical education, the pedagogical application of the wisdom encapsulated in riddles reflects a rich body of scholarly and educational value.

It is well known that riddles describe animate or inanimate objects and phenomena from nature and society without directly naming them, instead drawing metaphorical comparisons to other objects or events that share certain characteristics. The essence of a riddle lies, of course, in its answer. In order to discover the answer, a child is intellectually stimulated to search, comparing the similarities between different things and phenomena. As a result, the child not only finds the correct answer but also acquires new knowledge about previously unfamiliar concepts. Furthermore, the lexical units and linguistic diversity used in naming the compared objects within a riddle enhance the artistic quality of speech. The use of literary devices in riddles—such as metaphor, personification, epithets, alliteration, and analogy—greatly contributes to the development of thinking skills. For example, consider the following riddles: "Golden stake beneath the earth" – (carrot) [3]; "A piece of bread that fills the world with its taste" – (the

moon).

Through deeper engagement with riddles, children learn to avoid repetition in their speech, seek out synonyms, and express their thoughts in more artistic and refined ways. This, undoubtedly, expands their vocabulary. Just like proverbs, riddles can be widely and effectively applied across all subjects within educational institutions. For instance, in ethics (character education) classes, presenting the lesson topic through riddles makes the session more engaging and meaningful.

Nearly every riddle conveys ideas related to ethics and moral conduct. In character education (etiquette) classes, a single riddle can serve as the basis for an entire lesson. Such riddles, which reflect age-old expressions of moral norms, tend to leave a lasting impression on young learners and possess strong educational influence. For example:

- **Greater than the sky** – (aspiration)
- **Once lost, never regained** – (honor, dignity)
- **An act required by custom, yet often forgotten** – (greeting/saying salam)
- **Not fire, yet it burns; not a knife, yet it cuts** – (a lie)
- **Cannot be bought with gold, barely earned** – (time) [3]

Since ancient times, great emphasis has been placed on moral education within our culture. As a result, wise thoughts and ideas about ethics have been deeply embedded in the structure of riddles. Much like the literary elegance of proverbs, the riddles mentioned above highlight timeless human virtues. These riddles can be effectively employed in character education lessons. Using riddles throughout the entire lesson—from introduction to conclusion—serves to deepen students' intellectual engagement and sharpen their moral reasoning.

Riddles are a tool for testing intellect, mental sharpness, and the level of cognitive reasoning. Indeed, only those who have been mentally trained through challenges, who possess broad knowledge about the surrounding world, and who have well-developed thinking and reasoning skills are capable of solving riddles.

Regardless of the subject in which they are used, riddles can significantly enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning, leading to improved educational outcomes. This is because, irrespective of students' varying levels of knowledge and skill acquisition, all learners share a strong intrinsic curiosity to uncover the "mystery" or solve the puzzle. Therefore, incorporating riddles across all types of instructional models is both beneficial and pedagogically appropriate.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the masterpieces of our people's artistic thinking—namely, folk literature—represent a timeless collection of values that play a vital role in the spiritual development of the younger generation. Indeed, the more civilization and high-level technologies advance, the more naturally grows the need for folklore, which serves as the cradle of a nation's identity and mentality.

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