METHODOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING TOLERANCE COMPETENCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS THROUGH CHILDREN'S GAME FOLKLORE

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ABSTRACT

This thesis substantiates a methodology for developing tolerance competence in primary school pupils by integrating children's game folklore into classroom and extracurricular learning. The approach treats traditional play genres—counting-out rhymes, circle games, call-and-response chants, role-play games, and verbal playful dialogues—as culturally meaningful micro-situations for learning respectful communication, cooperation, empathy, and fair decision-making. The methodology is structured around diagnostic, formative, and reflective-evaluative phases and is implemented through cooperative learning, dialogic instruction, and guided reflection. The paper describes the pedagogical conditions, teacher actions, and assessment tools needed to ensure that tolerance is formed as a stable competence rather than a situational behavior.

KEYWORDS: Tolerance competence, primary education, children's folklore, game folklore, cooperative learning, empathy, inclusive classroom, formative assessment.

INTRODUCTION

The increasing cultural, linguistic, and social diversity of contemporary classrooms makes tolerance competence a central educational outcome in primary school. Tolerance in this context is understood not as passive "endurance" of difference, but as an active readiness to respect others' dignity, accept diversity of opinions and identities, and interact peacefully when interests collide. Primary school age is especially sensitive for such development because pupils' social experience rapidly expands: peer interaction becomes a leading sphere where norms of fairness, reciprocity, and recognition are learned. However, tolerance competence cannot be formed only through declarative moral instruction, since stable attitudes and behaviors emerge in repeated, emotionally meaningful situations where children practice perspective-taking, manage conflict, and coordinate actions with others.

Children's game folklore provides precisely such situations. It is a culturally tested system of rules, roles, verbal formulas, and symbolic actions through which children learn cooperation and competition, negotiate boundaries, and establish group membership. Folklore-based games are also accessible: they rely on simple texts, rhythmic repetition, movement, and shared emotional engagement, which match the developmental characteristics of primary pupils. Therefore, the methodological task is to transform children's game folklore from a spontaneous playground phenomenon into a pedagogically guided resource that develops tolerance competence while preserving the authenticity and joy of play.

The study is based on a methodological design that combines content selection, didactic modeling, and classroom implementation principles. The first step is selecting game folklore

units that naturally include cooperation, turn-taking, role distribution, and rule-based fairness. Such units are chosen not for entertainment alone, but for their social-learning potential: they create moments where pupils must listen to others, accept outcomes, and repair interaction after mistakes. The second step is didactic adaptation, which preserves the folkloric core while aligning the game with lesson objectives and age-appropriate language. Teacher guidance is planned in a "light-touch" manner: the teacher frames the task, models respectful speech, monitors safety and inclusion, and initiates reflection without turning the game into a rigid drill. The methodology proceeds through three phases. In the diagnostic phase, the teacher identifies the baseline level of tolerance-related behaviors in the class, focusing on indicators such as willingness to cooperate, reactions to losing, inclusion of peers, and conflict resolution strategies. Observation protocols, sociometric mini-procedures, and short situational prompts are used to understand typical interaction patterns. In the formative phase, game folklore is integrated regularly into lessons (language, reading, music, and moral education) and class activities. Each session follows a consistent logic: joint entry into the game text and rules, cooperative play in mixed groups, and guided reflection. In the reflective-evaluative phase, pupils consolidate experience through short discussions, "I-messages," storytelling about emotions, and micro-decisions about improving group rules, while the teacher assesses progress using behavior-based rubrics and pupil self-reflection prompts.

The proposed methodology produces a structured pathway for translating play experience into competence. First, it normalizes diversity within the class by organizing games that require mixed-group participation and rotating roles, which reduces stable "in-groups" and supports respectful contact. Second, it develops communicative tolerance through repeated practice of polite formulas, turn-taking, and listening embedded in the rhythm of folkloric texts. Third, it forms emotional self-regulation, because rule-based games inevitably create frustration and excitement; teacher-guided reflection helps pupils name emotions, accept limits, and choose non-aggressive responses. Fourth, it strengthens moral reasoning at an age-appropriate level by connecting game outcomes to simple fairness principles, such as "the rule is the same for everyone" and "we help the team succeed."

A key methodological effect is the shift from episodic "good behavior" to more stable interaction habits. When game folklore is used systematically and accompanied by reflection, pupils begin to generalize learned patterns beyond play situations: they show more readiness to invite excluded peers, negotiate disagreements with less escalation, and recognize the difference between competing and humiliating. The methodology also supports inclusive education, because many folklore games can be adjusted to different abilities through role variety and multi-sensory participation, enabling pupils with diverse needs to contribute meaningfully.

The effectiveness of the methodology can be explained through the social nature of learning. In children's game folklore, the "rule" becomes a shared cultural mediator that organizes behavior, allowing pupils to coordinate actions without constant adult control. This supports the development of self-regulation and responsibility, since pupils experience that group success depends on mutual respect. At the same time, folkloric texts work as emotional and linguistic scaffolds: repetition, rhythm, and formulaic speech reduce anxiety and help children communicate in predictable, safe patterns, which is especially important for shy pupils or those with limited language confidence.

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Pedagogically, the decisive condition is not the game itself but the reflective layer. Without reflection, play may reinforce exclusion or domination; with guided reflection, even small conflicts become learning moments. The teacher's role is to make tolerance visible as an action: noticing inclusion, naming respectful choices, and turning "mistakes" into discussion about alternatives. Another crucial condition is fairness in organization. If roles are distributed transparently and rotated, pupils perceive the classroom as just, which increases willingness to accept difference. Finally, the integration of game folklore into curriculum areas (language, reading, arts) prevents tolerance education from becoming an isolated moral lecture; instead, it becomes a natural part of learning culture, connecting cultural heritage with modern civic competencies.

Children's game folklore offers a rich methodological resource for developing tolerance competence in primary school because it creates repeated, meaningful social situations where pupils must cooperate, negotiate rules, and manage emotions. The proposed methodology organizes this potential through phased implementation, cooperative play formats, and reflective practices that transform experience into stable competence. As a result, tolerance is formed as a complex educational outcome that includes respectful communication, empathy, self-regulation, and readiness for constructive interaction in diverse classrooms.

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