

THE PLACE OF VIKTOR USPENSKY'S PEDAGOGICAL HERITAGE IN THE MODERN SYSTEM OF TEACHER TRAINING

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Abstract. *The article examines the pedagogical heritage of Viktor Aleksandrovich Uspensky (1879–1949), the musician-ethnographer, composer and professor whose activity in Turkestan and Uzbekistan laid the foundations of the national system of professional music education, and determines the place of this heritage in the contemporary preparation of teachers. The author proceeds from the thesis that the pedagogical significance of Uspensky's work is not confined to the history of a particular discipline and that it may be reconstructed as a system of transferable principles governing the relation between a national cultural tradition and institutional education. Relying upon the historical-biographical, comparative-analytical and hermeneutic methods together with pedagogical modelling, the study identifies five such principles: the primacy of the primary source and of direct contact with the bearers of a tradition; the transformation of tacit, orally transmitted knowledge into a form capable of institutional transmission; the synthesis of the academic method with the mentorship model of the oral-professional tradition; the inseparability of research from teaching; and the orientation of scholarly work towards the formation of national pedagogical cadres. These principles are correlated with L. Shulman's conception of pedagogical content knowledge and with the theory of legitimate peripheral participation of J. Lave and E. Wenger. The limits of the heritage are also examined, and the conditions of its productive assimilation in the pedagogical higher education of Uzbekistan are determined.*

Keywords: *V.A. Uspensky, pedagogical heritage, teacher training, national musical heritage, shashmaqom, notation, oral-professional tradition, ustoz–shogird, pedagogical content knowledge, legitimate peripheral participation, cultural transmission, research-based teacher education.*

INTRODUCTION

The appeal to the pedagogical heritage of the past occupies an ambiguous position in contemporary educational discourse. On the one hand, the names of scholars and educators who stood at the origins of national systems of education are invoked regularly and with evident respect; on the other, this invocation frequently remains ceremonial, confined to anniversary formulas in which the heritage is honoured but not examined, praised but not applied. A heritage treated in this manner performs a decorative rather than a constructive function. The task of scholarly inquiry consists, by contrast, in reconstructing from a historical body of work a system of principles that retain explanatory and projective power under conditions entirely different from those in which they arose — that is, in converting reverence into method. The activity of Viktor Aleksandrovich Uspensky (1879–1949) represents a particularly instructive object for such a reconstruction. A graduate of the St Petersburg Conservatory, where in 1913 he completed the composition class of A.K. Lyadov, he devoted the remainder of his life to Central Asia. In 1919 he became one of the organisers and teachers of the People's Conservatory in Tashkent; from 1932 he worked as a researcher at the Research Institute of Art Studies; from 1934 he taught at the Higher Music School, which in 1936 was transformed into the Conservatory, where he held a professorship. He was



awarded the title of People’s Artist of the Turkmen SSR in 1929 and of the Uzbek SSR in 1937, and in 1943 he received the degree of Doctor of Art History. His biography is thus simultaneously the biography of an institution: the formation of professional musical education in the region proceeded through the same years and largely through the same person. The central scholarly achievement with which his name is associated is the notation of the Bukharan Shashmaqom. The work was begun in Bukhara in 1922 and completed by publication in Moscow in 1924 under the title *Six Musical Poems* [8]. Its significance is determined by a circumstance that cannot be reproduced: the recording was made from the last great bearers of the unbroken tradition, Ota Jalol (1845–1928) and Ota Giyos (1852–1926), at a moment when the social structures that had sustained the oral transmission of this music for centuries were undergoing rapid dissolution. A comparable undertaking was realised in the Turkmen expedition of 1927–1928, whose results were published jointly with V.M. Belyaev as a volume combining analytical studies with one hundred and fifteen notated pieces [9]. In both cases the scholar acted at the boundary between a vanishing form of transmission and an emerging institutional one. It is precisely this position at the boundary that converts a specialised musicological undertaking into a pedagogical problem of general significance. J. Dewey defined education as the process through which a society renews itself, transmitting by means of communication the habits, aims and dispositions of its passing members to those who are to succeed them, and he insisted that such transmission is never a mechanical handing over but a reconstruction of experience [1, p. 1–11]. Any national culture whose knowledge has been transmitted through personal contact between master and apprentice confronts, upon the establishment of a system of mass institutional education, the same question: how may a body of knowledge that exists only in performance, only in the presence of its bearer, and only in a relationship be transferred into a form that can be taught to many people by many teachers in standardised institutions. The answer given in each historical case determines what the national educational system will subsequently preserve and what it will irretrievably lose. Uspensky’s heritage is valuable above all as a worked example of such an answer. The theoretical apparatus required for its reconstruction is supplied by several conceptions of contemporary pedagogy. L. Shulman, in drawing attention to the missing paradigm in research on teaching, established that what distinguishes a teacher from a specialist in a discipline is the capacity to transform content into forms accessible to learners — through representations, analogies, illustrations and examples that anticipate the difficulties characteristic of that content [7, p. 6–11]. Notation, considered pedagogically, is exactly such a transformation: it converts a performance into a representation that may be studied, analysed and reproduced by those who have never heard its original bearer. The scholar-ethnographer here performs the operation that constitutes the core of pedagogical content knowledge. The opposite pole of the same problem is described by the theory of situated learning. J. Lave and E. Wenger demonstrated that learning in traditional forms of apprenticeship is not the transfer of information but a process of legitimate peripheral participation, in which the novice gradually moves from the margins of a community of practice towards full membership, assimilating simultaneously the technique, the language and the identity of the practitioner [4, p. 29–43]. The ustoz–shogird relationship that sustained the maqom tradition is a classical instance of such a community. The pedagogical dilemma may therefore be stated with precision: the institution is able to transmit what notation has captured, but it is not able, by that means alone, to transmit what is assimilated only through participation.



The relevance of this dilemma for the contemporary preparation of teachers extends well beyond the sphere of music. The modernisation of pedagogical education in Uzbekistan, the formation of new models of university activity and the renewal of the content of professional training [5, p. 325–328] proceed in parallel with the task of forming in young people a spiritual worldview rooted in the national tradition through the system of continuous education [2, p. 314–316; 3, p. 10–13]. These two processes are frequently pursued in isolation from one another: the institutional reform operates with competencies and credits, while the appeal to tradition operates with values and commemorations. Uspensky’s heritage is instructive precisely because in it the two were a single undertaking — the tradition was studied in order that it might be taught, and the institution was built in order that the tradition might survive. The aim of the present article consists in reconstructing the pedagogical heritage of V.A. Uspensky as a system of transferable principles and in determining its place in the contemporary system of teacher training. The tasks subordinate to this aim comprise the identification of these principles on the basis of his scholarly and teaching activity, their correlation with contemporary pedagogical theory, the examination of the limits of the heritage, and the determination of the conditions of its productive assimilation. The scientific novelty of the work lies in the interpretation of a historical ethnographic and musicological undertaking as a model of the transformation of cultural knowledge into educational content — that is, in the reading of Uspensky’s heritage as a general pedagogical rather than a narrowly disciplinary legacy.

The study employs the historical-biographical method in order to establish the sequence and the institutional context of V.A. Uspensky’s scholarly and teaching activity. The hermeneutic approach has been used to reconstruct the pedagogical meaning of undertakings that were not formulated by their author in pedagogical terms. The comparative-analytical method has served to correlate the principles derived from this reconstruction with the conceptions of contemporary pedagogy, and pedagogical modelling to formulate the conditions of their assimilation in the preparation of teachers. The material of the investigation comprises the published results of Uspensky’s expeditionary work, reference and encyclopaedic data on his biography and institutional roles, and the theoretical literature on pedagogical content knowledge, situated learning and the study of musical cultures.

The first principle derived from the heritage under consideration may be designated the primacy of the primary source. Uspensky did not reconstruct the maqom from descriptions, treatises or the accounts of intermediaries: he travelled to Bukhara and recorded the music directly from its last unbroken bearers, and he subsequently sought, over a considerable period, the means for an expedition to Khorezm. The pedagogical consequence of this principle is that the future teacher must encounter the object of his future teaching in its living form before encountering its textbook summary. Preparation that begins with a generalisation and never descends to the primary source produces a teacher capable of reproducing conclusions but incapable of judging them, and the substitution of direct acquaintance by a survey of secondary literature constitutes one of the most persistent defects of contemporary pedagogical education. The second principle concerns the transformation of tacit knowledge into transmissible form. The notation of an oral tradition is not a technical operation of recording but an act of analysis: the notator must decide what in the sounding whole constitutes the structure of the work and what belongs to the



individual manner of its performer, and every such decision determines what subsequent generations will regard as the work itself. In the terms of the cultural-historical theory, notation is a sign system, that is, a mediating artefact through which an external, socially distributed activity is converted into a form that may subsequently be internalised by the individual learner [10, p. 52–57]. This is precisely the operation that Shulman identified as the core of professional teaching knowledge, and its recognition yields an important corollary for the preparation of teachers. The transformation of a subject into teachable form is an interpretative act bearing responsibility, not a neutral simplification, and the student must be taught to perform it consciously and to justify the decisions it involves. The third principle concerns the synthesis of two systems of knowledge rather than the displacement of one by the other. Uspensky applied the European academic apparatus — notation, analysis, classification, publication — to a tradition formed within an entirely different epistemic order, and the outcome of this encounter was neither the dissolution of the local tradition in the European one nor the rejection of academic method. The result was a hybrid form in which the tradition acquired an institutional existence while retaining its identity. For the modern system of teacher training, within which international standards and national cultural content must be reconciled, this constitutes the most directly applicable element of the heritage: the task is formulated not as a choice between borrowing and authenticity but as the construction of a form in which each sustains the other. The fourth principle concerns the unity of research and teaching. Uspensky taught what he had himself collected and analysed, and the material of his lectures was the material of his expeditions. The contemporary separation of these functions — in which research is performed for publication indicators while teaching reproduces a textbook written by others — destroys precisely the connection that renders a teacher an authority rather than an intermediary. Research-based preparation of teachers signifies, in this light, not the obligation of the student to publish but the inclusion of the student in the real inquiry of his mentor, including the collection of material, its processing and the discussion of ambiguous cases, through which the student acquires the professional disposition that no course in methodology is able to impart. The fifth principle concerns the orientation towards the formation of national cadres and of institutions. Uspensky’s participation in the organisation of the People’s Conservatory in 1919 and his subsequent professorship indicate that he regarded the institution as an instrument for the preservation of the tradition rather than as an administrative framework for his personal work. A scholar who creates no successors leaves behind a collection; a scholar who creates an institution leaves behind a school. In the preparation of teachers this principle is realised as the requirement that the teacher educator be assessed by the professional maturity of his graduates and by the viability of the practices he establishes, and not solely by his personal scholarly output.

The fifth principle must, however, be accompanied by a critical qualification without which the appeal to the heritage would become apologetic. Notation inevitably loses what notation is unable to record: the microtonal nuance, the variability of performance, the improvisational freedom and the situational character of the oral tradition. The reflection of ethnomusicology upon its own central procedure has long recognised that every transcription is simultaneously an interpretation and a reduction, and that the choice of what to record is governed by the analytical categories the transcriber brings with him [6, p. 74–91]. The fixed text, once published, begins to function as a norm, and the living variability that preceded it is gradually perceived as deviation. This is the general law of the institutionalisation of

cultural knowledge, and the theory of situated learning explains it precisely: what is assimilated through participation in a community cannot be wholly replaced by a representation of it. The pedagogical conclusion is that the institution must deliberately preserve forms of participation — mentorship, workshops, direct contact with masters — alongside the transmission of codified content, and that the future teacher must know not only what the transformation of knowledge preserves but also what it removes. The final result concerns the concrete forms in which the heritage may be assimilated within the preparation of teachers in Uzbekistan. Three such forms appear the most realisable. The first is the expeditionary component of professional practice, in which students collect material in the field — in the mahalla, in rural schools, in the workshops of craftsmen and performers — and subsequently process it under the guidance of a mentor, thereby reproducing the sequence from the primary source to the generalisation. The second is the historical-pedagogical case, in which the students are presented with Uspensky’s actual dilemma — what to record and what to omit, what to regard as the structure of the work and what as the manner of its performer — and are required to justify their own decisions, which converts the abstract requirement of conscious transformation into a verifiable exercise. The third is the workshop conducted jointly by a university teacher and a practising bearer of the tradition, in which the academic and the participatory modes of transmission operate simultaneously rather than in succession.

CONCLUSION

The analysis undertaken permits the following conclusions. First, the pedagogical heritage of V.A. Uspensky admits of reconstruction as a system of transferable principles and is not reducible to the history of a particular discipline. Its general significance consists in the fact that it offers a worked solution to the problem that confronts every national culture upon the establishment of institutional education: how knowledge transmitted through personal contact may be converted into content capable of being taught at scale. Second, the central operation of this solution — the conversion of a performance into a representation that may be studied by those who have never heard its bearer — coincides in its structure with the transformation of subject matter into teachable form that constitutes the core of professional pedagogical knowledge. The future teacher should therefore be taught to perform this transformation deliberately, with an understanding of the responsibility it carries, rather than to regard it as a neutral act of simplification. Third, the five principles identified — the primacy of the primary source, the conscious transformation of tacit knowledge, the synthesis of academic method with the mentorship tradition, the unity of research and teaching, and the orientation towards the formation of cadres and institutions — together constitute a coherent model of the relation between tradition and institution, and each of them admits of direct realisation in contemporary pedagogical education. Fourth, the assimilation of this heritage requires a critical rather than a commemorative attitude. The institutional fixation of cultural knowledge is accompanied by an irreducible loss of everything that exists only in participation, and the educational system is obliged to compensate for this loss by deliberately preserving forms of mentorship and direct contact with the bearers of practice alongside the transmission of codified content. Fifth, the conditions for the productive realisation of the heritage in the pedagogical higher education of Uzbekistan consist in the inclusion of students in the real research activity of their mentors, in the construction of courses in such a way that acquaintance with the primary

source precedes its generalisation, and in the coordination of institutional modernisation with work on national cultural content. The prospect of further research consists in the elaboration of concrete models of courses constructed upon these principles and in their experimental verification.

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