

The Role of Oral History in the Research of Social and Political Processes During the Independence Period in Uzbekistan

Muattar Ibodullaevna Berdiyeva

Lecturer, Faculty of History, National University of Uzbekistan

Abstract: This article examines the role of oral history in the teaching and development of historical studies, with particular emphasis on analyzing historical events through existing documents and archival sources. Special attention is devoted to the study of the Independence period, where interviews with historians, politicians, direct participants, and ordinary citizens—as well as personal memories and recollections—serve to enrich and ensure an objective understanding of history. Furthermore, the concept and practical application of the oral history method are discussed.

Keywords: history, Independence period, teaching history, methodology of teaching history, methods of teaching history, oral history, interview, socio-political processes.

INTRODUCTION. In studying the processes of state-building, the formation of political institutions, and the understanding of national identity in the public consciousness, traditional sources—documents, statistics, and official statements—are particularly important. Given that documents often express official opinion, a key objective remains the full reflection of public sentiment, as well as the views and experiences of ordinary citizens.

Literary Analysis. In recent years, new approaches have been emerging in the field of historical research and its theoretical foundations in modern history. These include postmodernism, microhistory, the history of everyday processes, the history of mentality, oral history, and gender studies.[1, p.-17] Thus, one of the innovative methods widely used in historical science and its methodology—oral history—is gaining increasing importance.

Oral history is a scientific method based on the study of memoirs, personal testimonies, interviews, and conversations of contemporaries as historical sources. Oral history, as a new discipline and method, began to emerge in the second half of the 20th century. The founder of the oral history method is the American journalist Joe Gould. [2. p.-146] This method, which became widespread in Western historiography in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, is still widely used in global historiography. It allows for the analysis of history not only through official documents but also through the eyes of eyewitnesses. This underscores the valuable aspects of this method's documents.

An example of this is the preservation of the indelible impressions of eyewitnesses to historical events, as well as the availability of unique information not found in other sources. The oral history research method—the interview—captures the knowledge of a person who lived during a specific period. Eyewitness accounts of a given event are recorded on audio and video equipment.

Regional historical research is being conducted in Uzbekistan. [3. p.-280] based on folk memories and memoirs, the oral history method, and in this regard – academic research based on the oral history method in local communities, oral stories and interviews about collectivization during the Soviet era, an oral historical analysis of the collectivization period based on more than 120 interviews, and a number of other studies can be cited.

Discussion. Educating eyewitnesses of this period in the history of socio-political processes in Uzbekistan after independence is one of our greatest achievements. The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan particularly emphasized the importance of educating young people in the spirit of patriotism and national pride, which requires high-quality history teaching and the expansion of scientific research in this area. [6.] This creates an excellent opportunity to use the oral history method.

For example, the recollections of eyewitnesses to the Declaration of Independence reflect the spiritual state of the people at that time, and a visual presentation of history through interviews with them and familiarization of history students in higher education in classes will help them imagine the situation of that time. It's also important to note that interviews with politicians, lawyers, and intellectuals involved in drafting the 1992 Constitution shed light on details not reflected in the documents.

At the same time, the views of political party leaders and public organizations provide an opportunity to more deeply examine the evolution of the political system. The changes that ordinary citizens observed in their daily lives during the period of independence are an important source for understanding the general mood of society. The recollections of young people are important for analyzing the views of the generation that grew up in the first years of independence.

Archaeological research conducted in Uzbekistan since independence also plays a significant role. Copper and bronze processing (casting) centers operating in different historical periods in the territory of Sogdiana were identified for the first time, the chemical composition of metals, the ratio of metals in alloys, and the dynamic development of casting methods were determined. At the same time, the sources of raw materials that formed the basis for the development of metalworking in Sogdiana were identified. In 2012, scientific research was conducted to study the non-metallurgy of the Amirabad and Tozabogob cultures of the Bronze Age in the southern Aral Sea region.

At the same time, the chemical and metallurgical properties of metal objects were studied, attempts were made to link metals to specific raw material centers, a distribution map of chemical group samples was developed, a typological analysis of metal objects was conducted, discovered metal samples were compared with metal objects from cultures of specific regions, and a historical description of the development of Bronze Age metallurgy in the Khorezm region was provided. We all know this. Interviewing scholars who were and are directly involved in this research, and documenting it in historical works, will serve as an interesting and useful source of information not only for current but also for future history students.

However, given that human memory changes over time and the strength of subjective views can influence historical objectivity, the use of oral history requires comparative analysis with documents, press materials, and statistical data.

Using oral history to study socio-political processes in Uzbekistan during the period of independence makes a significant contribution to the development of historical scholarship. This method incorporates not only the history of political institutions or documents, but also the feelings, views, and experiences of ordinary people as a scholarly source. Thus, the history of the independence period can be studied and, of course, taught more fully, objectively, and multifacetedly.

CONCLUSION: In teaching history, it is important to utilize the memoirs, recollections, and personal experiences of living eyewitnesses, rather than limiting oneself to written sources. This method allows students to more vividly imagine, experience, and deeply understand historical events. However, given that historical events occur in different periods, the approach to them must be appropriate. It is important for every historian to consider the reliance on historical evidence, whether reliable or not, when describing historical events. In this sense, the use of oral history in this manner makes a significant contribution.

Oral history is considered a highly effective means of preserving national memory and passing it on to future generations when studying the history of the independence period.

It develops students' skills in critical thinking, independent research, interviewing, and analysis. The demand for teaching subjects in an engaging, creative, and interactive manner in today's innovative educational process makes the use of oral history relevant. Oral history is a modern trend in history teaching and is of great importance for improving the effectiveness of education, preserving national memory, and developing historical awareness.

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