



TEACHING MUSICAL HERITAGE IN THE CLASSROOM: A STRUCTURED LISTENING APPROACH TO MAQOM

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Abstract

This article explores the pedagogical potential of teaching maqom as a form of musical heritage through structured listening activities in classroom settings. In contemporary music education, the transmission of traditional music requires methods that move beyond simple exposure and encourage active perception, interpretation, and reflection. The study examines how structured listening can support students' understanding of maqom by guiding them to recognize musical features, respond to expressive content, and connect what they hear with broader cultural meanings. Drawing on heritage-based music pedagogy and learner-centered teaching principles, the article argues that maqom can function not only as a traditional repertoire but also as an educational resource for developing listening skills, cultural awareness, and analytical thinking. The paper proposes a classroom-oriented model in which listening tasks are organized through preparation, focused listening, guided discussion, and reflective response. This approach helps students engage with maqom in a more meaningful and accessible way, particularly in secondary school music education. The article concludes that structured listening provides an effective bridge between national musical heritage and contemporary pedagogical practice, making maqom more understandable, teachable, and relevant for young learners.

Keywords: maqom, musical heritage, music pedagogy, structured listening, classroom teaching, cultural awareness, secondary education.



Introduction

In contemporary education, the teaching of musical heritage is no longer limited to preservation alone; it also concerns the transformation of cultural memory into meaningful classroom experience. Recent scholarship on heritage in education shows that culturally rooted artistic forms can function not only as objects of transmission, but also as pedagogical tools that strengthen learners' emotional, social, and cognitive development. Research in music teaching likewise indicates that teachers generally value heritage content and consider it important for the curriculum, even though such content is often not represented strongly enough in actual classroom practice. In this context, the central question is not simply whether traditional music should be taught, but how it can be taught in ways that are intellectually engaging, pedagogically effective, and culturally meaningful.¹ This question is especially significant in Uzbekistan, where maqom occupies a distinguished place within national musical culture. UNESCO defines Shashmaqom as a "fusion of vocal and instrumental music, melodic and rhythmic idioms and poetry," emphasizing its complexity as both an artistic and cultural phenomenon. UNESCO also notes that Shashmaqom was proclaimed a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2003 and inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2008. These recognitions confirm that maqom is not merely a historical repertoire, but a living form of intangible heritage whose transmission to younger generations remains a major educational task. When brought into the classroom, therefore, maqom should be approached not only as a symbol of national culture, but as a meaningful pedagogical resource capable of linking heritage, musical understanding, and student formation.² A major difficulty in teaching traditional music at school lies in the difference between exposure and understanding. Simply allowing students to hear a musical work does not necessarily lead to interpretation, insight, or aesthetic response. As Hatch (2022) argues, students "need to be deliberately taught how to deeply and critically listen to music." This observation is especially relevant to maqom, whose expressive

¹ Cultural Heritage in Education: Flamenco as a Pedagogical Tool for Future Teachers in Spain <https://www.mdpi.com/2571-9408/8/1/20>

² Shashmaqom music. <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/shashmaqom-music-00089>



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language often requires guided attention to melodic development, rhythmic motion, emotional nuance, and cultural meaning. Earlier music-education scholarship also supports this position. Loane (1984) described musical experience as “thinking embodied in sound,” while also suggesting that the analysis of listening has a supportive educational role. Taken together, these views suggest that listening in music education must be understood as an active and teachable process rather than a passive classroom activity.³ Recent research further strengthens this argument by showing that cognitively and emotionally guided approaches to music listening can improve students’ engagement with lessons while also supporting knowledge acquisition. Vidulin, Žauhar, and Plavšić (2025) found that a cognitive-emotional approach to music listening increased students’ liking of lessons while maintaining or improving learning outcomes. Such findings are particularly useful for the teaching of maqom, since this tradition cannot be reduced to technical musical description alone. Its educational value emerges most fully when students are prepared to listen attentively, guided to identify important musical features, encouraged to verbalize their responses, and invited to connect sound with broader cultural meanings. Structured listening, therefore, offers a promising bridge between the inherited depth of maqom and the practical needs of contemporary classroom pedagogy. For these reasons, this article examines the pedagogical potential of teaching maqom through structured listening activities in classroom music education. It argues that maqom should be treated not simply as a revered cultural legacy, but as a pedagogically functional resource through which students can develop listening discipline, interpretive thinking, and cultural awareness. By placing listening at the center of instruction, the classroom becomes a space where heritage is not only remembered, but actively experienced, interpreted, and educationally renewed.⁴ Recent studies increasingly argue that musical heritage should be understood not only as an object of preservation, but also as an active educational resource. Research on heritage education in music has shown that teachers generally value cultural heritage content and consider it important for

³ Listening: Considerations in Teaching an Invisible Skill <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/27527646221130312>

⁴ Cultural Heritage in Music Teaching: the Experience in Croatia
<https://journals.um.si/index.php/education/en/article/view/4676>



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the school curriculum. At the same time, classroom implementation often remains uneven, and teachers may feel that heritage-related material is not sufficiently represented or methodologically supported in music lessons (Mucić & Berbić Kolar, 2024). This tension between recognition and implementation is highly relevant to the teaching of maqom in Uzbekistan, where the tradition is culturally respected but not always pedagogically activated in ways that are accessible to school learners. A similar tendency can be seen in broader heritage-education research. In a 2025 study on flamenco in Spain, cultural heritage was examined as a pedagogical tool rather than a merely symbolic tradition. The study found that social and cognitive factors such as attention, memory, and group cohesion shaped how heritage content was valued in educational settings, suggesting that traditional arts can enrich educational practice when they are integrated through purposeful teaching strategies (Heredia-Carroza et al., 2025). This comparative perspective is useful for maqom pedagogy because it supports the idea that national musical traditions should enter the classroom through methods that connect culture with learning processes, not through ceremonial mention alone. Within this framework, maqom may be viewed as a particularly rich pedagogical resource. UNESCO describes Shashmaqom as a complex fusion of vocal and instrumental music, rhythmic and melodic idioms, and poetry, while also emphasizing its long historical development and the special training required for its performance. These features make maqom an important part of intangible cultural heritage, but they also explain why students may struggle to understand it when it is presented only through teacher explanation or brief exposure. The educational challenge, therefore, is to transform cultural value into teachable experience. A central issue in the literature on music education is the distinction between hearing music and learning through listening. In classroom settings, listening is often treated as a background or supporting activity, even though research shows that it is fundamental to musical understanding. Hatch (2022) argues that students may have extensive experience with passive listening, yet still need explicit guidance in order to listen deeply and critically. The pedagogical significance of this claim is substantial: if listening remains invisible and unstructured, students are less likely to develop the vocabulary, attentiveness, and interpretive awareness needed for meaningful musical response. More recent



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classroom-based research supports this position by showing that listening tasks become more educationally productive when students are asked to externalize and reflect on what they hear. Nikolaou, Theodorakopoulos, and Galani (2024), for example, found that primary students responded positively when music listening was combined with verbal, written, and visual representation. Their study suggests that music listening becomes more meaningful when learners are encouraged not only to hear sound, but to articulate emotions, images, and ideas generated by the musical experience. For maqom pedagogy, this is especially important, because students often need mediated entry points-discussion, reflection, comparison, and guided description-in order to approach a tradition whose expressive language may initially seem distant or difficult. This literature reinforces the argument that listening should be treated as a structured pedagogical act. In the case of maqom, structured listening can help students identify musical features, attend to emotional character, and gradually connect sonic detail with cultural meaning. Such an approach moves beyond passive exposure and turns listening into a form of guided inquiry. In educational terms, this is where heritage becomes teachable: not at the moment when students merely encounter a traditional piece, but at the moment when they are helped to interpret it. Another important strand in the literature concerns the relationship between music pedagogy and cultural relevance. Recent work on general music education argues that culturally relevant pedagogy can make music classrooms more meaningful to students by linking academic success with cultural competence and critical awareness. Rather than presenting music as culturally neutral content, this approach encourages teachers to connect instruction to the lived and inherited worlds of learners (Dockan et al., 2025). For the teaching of maqom, this idea is especially significant. Because maqom belongs to the historical and aesthetic memory of Uzbek culture, it offers a strong basis for culturally grounded music learning when it is presented in ways that invite understanding rather than distance. The broader music-pedagogy literature also points to the value of active and multimodal methods. A recent systematic review in basic education found that music pedagogy can foster cognitive, emotional, and expressive development, while also showing that more research is needed at primary and secondary levels and that teachers require stronger methodological



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preparation for implementation (del Barrio & Arús, 2024). Although that review focuses on music and movement pedagogy, its implications extend to listening-based instruction as well: active, guided, and well-designed classroom methods are more likely to produce meaningful learning than passive or purely transmissive models. This supports the argument that maqom teaching should be organized through pedagogical structure rather than informal exposure. Taken together, these strands of literature lead to a clear conclusion. Heritage education values cultural continuity; listening pedagogy values guided perception and student response; culturally relevant music teaching values meaningful connection between content and learner identity. The proposed structured listening approach to maqom stands precisely at the intersection of these three fields. It treats maqom as heritage, listening as method, and the classroom as a space where cultural meaning can be actively constructed.

Conclusion

In conclusion, teaching maqom in school music education requires more than the transmission of information about a respected musical tradition. It requires a pedagogical approach that makes musical heritage understandable, meaningful, and educationally relevant for students. This article has argued that structured listening offers such an approach by transforming the classroom from a space of passive exposure into a space of active musical engagement. Through preparation, focused listening, guided discussion, and reflective response, students are given the opportunity to approach maqom not as distant cultural material, but as a living artistic language that can be heard, interpreted, and appreciated. The discussion has also shown that maqom possesses significant pedagogical value in the context of heritage-based music education. When introduced through carefully designed listening activities, it can support the development of students' listening competence, cultural awareness, interpretive thinking, and emotional responsiveness. In this sense, maqom functions not only as an element of national identity, but also as an educational resource capable of enriching contemporary classroom practice. Its inclusion in school music lessons can therefore contribute to both the preservation of cultural heritage and the improvement of learner-centered music pedagogy. Ultimately, the effectiveness



of maqom teaching depends not only on what is taught, but on how it is taught. A structured listening approach enables teachers to present traditional music in ways that are pedagogically accessible and intellectually engaging for young learners. For this reason, integrating maqom into classroom music education through guided listening should be regarded as a promising and necessary direction for the future development of music pedagogy in Uzbekistan.

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