

Linguopoetic Typology of Traditional Formulas in Karakalpak, Turkmen and English Folk Tales

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ABSTRACT

*This article examines the linguopoetic and typological features of traditional formulas and phraseological units in Karakalpak, Turkmen, and English folk tales. The study focuses on traditional opening, transitional, and closing formulas, as well as phraseological expressions that contribute to the composition, imagery, and stylistic organization of fairy-tale discourse. A comparative analysis demonstrates that the Karakalpak and Turkmen formulas *bir bar eken*, *birjoqeken* and the English “Once upon a time” perform a similar introductory function, although their semantic structures differ. The study also identifies phraseological units that express characters’ living conditions, emotions, actions, relationships, and supernatural abilities. The findings show that some Karakalpak and Turkmen phraseological units are structurally and semantically close, whereas English expressions are more often functionally equivalent rather than literally identical. The article argues that the comparative study of traditional formulas should consider not only lexical similarity but also their compositional, semantic, and linguopoetic functions in the fairy-tale text.*

Keywords: Folk tale, fairy-tale language, traditional formula, phraseological unit, linguopoetics, comparative linguistics, Karakalpak, Turkmen, English, typology.

1. INTRODUCTION

Folk tales represent an important part of the cultural and linguistic heritage of every nation. Their genre-specific character is determined not only by plot structure, characters, and motifs but also by a distinctive system of traditional linguistic and poetic devices. Among these devices, traditional formulas and phraseological units occupy a particularly important position. They contribute to the organization of the narrative, create a specific fairy-tale atmosphere, characterize the actions and emotional states of characters, and preserve culturally significant patterns of expression.

One of the most recognizable characteristics of folk-tale discourse is the use of conventional opening formulas. A storyteller usually begins the narrative with a fixed expression that signals the transition from ordinary reality into the imaginary world of the tale. Similar formulas can also be observed in the middle and at the end of fairy tales. Thus, traditional formulas may be divided into initial, medial, and final types [1: 1-2]. In a broader sense, they serve as compositional markers that organize the narrative and establish a relationship between the storyteller and the audience.

Karakalpak and Turkmen folk tales frequently employ the formula *Bir bar eken, birjoqeken*, whereas English fairy tales traditionally begin with "Once upon a time." These expressions perform a similar communicative and compositional function: they introduce the narrative, separate the fictional world from everyday reality, and prepare the listener or reader for a special narrative space. However, their internal semantic structures are different. The Turkic formula combines the notions of existence and non-existence, while the English formula places the events in an unspecified past.

Phraseological units constitute another important component of fairy-tale language. They enable storytellers to express complex meanings in a concise and figurative form. In Karakalpak fairy tales, expressions such as *kúnkóriw*, *turmiskeshiriw*, *kúnkeshiriw*, *óldim-taldımdegende*, *ońjaǵınashıǵıw*, *bawırınakiriw*, *kózdenǵayıpboliw*, *awzıbirikpedi*,

gamjeme, *bas qosıw*, *birqasıqqanımnankeshseń*, and *jerge-kókkesıymaydı* perform various semantic and poetic functions [2: 33-35]. They describe characters' social conditions, actions, emotional states, interpersonal relationships, and extraordinary abilities.

The relevance of comparative research in this field is determined by the possibility of revealing both universal and national-specific features of fairy-tale discourse. Karakalpak and Turkmen belong to the Turkic language family, which explains certain structural and semantic similarities between their phraseological units. English, however, represents a different linguistic and cultural tradition. Therefore, comparison with English makes it possible to distinguish between formal equivalence and functional equivalence.

The purpose of this study is to identify and compare the linguopoetic functions of traditional formulas and phraseological units in Karakalpak, Turkmen, and English folk tales. Particular attention is paid to their compositional, semantic, figurative, and stylistic characteristics.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study is based on a comparative linguopoetic analysis of traditional formulas and phraseological units found in Karakalpak, Turkmen, and English folk tales. The primary material includes examples from Karakalpak folk tales and folklore collections, Turkmen fairy tales, and English fairy-tale texts. The analysis also takes into account previous studies of traditional fairy-tale formulas and phraseological units [1-6].

The research employs several complementary methods:

1. First, the **descriptive method** was used to identify traditional formulas and phraseological units and determine their structural and semantic characteristics.
2. Second, the **comparative method** was applied to establish similarities and differences between the three linguistic traditions. Particular attention was paid to cases where

expressions demonstrate either formal and semantic similarity or only functional equivalence.

3. Third, the **linguopoetic method** was used to determine how traditional formulas contribute to the artistic organization of fairy-tale discourse. This method made it possible to examine their role in creating a fictional atmosphere, organizing narrative transitions, emphasizing characters' actions, and producing emotional and figurative effects.
4. Finally, a **typological approach** was used to classify traditional formulas according to their position and function in the narrative. Following the classification of traditional fairy-tale formulas into initial, medial, and final types [1: 1-2], the present study considers opening formulas and transitional expressions as important compositional elements of fairy-tale discourse.

The analysis was conducted in several stages. First, opening formulas in the three traditions were compared. Second, transitional expressions indicating movement through time and space were examined. Third, phraseological units used to characterize characters and events were analyzed. Finally, Karakalpak and Turkmen expressions were compared with their English functional equivalents.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. *Traditional opening formulas*

The analysis demonstrates that traditional opening formulas constitute one of the most stable elements of folk-tale discourse. In Karakalpak and Turkmen fairy tales, the expression *Bir bar eken, birjoqeken* is widely used. A structurally similar formula exists in Uzbek: *Birborekan, biryo'qekan*. English fairy tales, in contrast, traditionally employ the expression "Once upon a time."

Despite their linguistic differences, these formulas perform several common functions. They:

1. signal the beginning of the narrative;
2. separate the fairy-tale world from everyday reality;

3. avoid the necessity of specifying an exact historical date;
4. prepare the audience for a fictional narrative environment;
5. establish a conventional relationship between the storyteller and the audience.

However, their semantic structures reveal national-specific differences. The Karakalpak and Turkmen formula combines the notions of existence and non-existence. The simultaneous presence of *bar* “there is” and *joq* “there is not” creates a special opposition between reality and fiction. The English “Once upon a time,” by contrast, primarily locates the narrative in an indefinite past. Thus, the comparison can be represented as follows:

Tradition	Traditional formula	Dominant semantic feature
Karakalpak	<i>Bir bar eken, birjoqeken</i>	Unity of existence and non-existence
Turkmen	<i>Bir bar eken, birýokeken</i>	Conditional existence
English	<i>Once upon a time</i>	Indefinite past

Therefore, the formulas are functionally similar but differ in their internal figurative logic.

3.2. Transitional and closing formulas

Traditional formulas are not restricted to the opening of fairy tales. They also organize transitions between individual narrative episodes. Such expressions make it possible to represent considerable periods of time and long distances without describing every detail of the journey.

Examples include Karakalpak expressions such as *Joljúpunti, joljúrse de moljúripti, Neşekünlerjoljúríp...*, and *Azjúríp, kópjúríp...*. Their English functional counterparts include expressions such as “He went on and on” and “After a long,” “long time...”

These constructions have a narrative economy function. Rather than describing the entire journey, they move the protagonist directly into the next stage of the plot. Consequently, they contribute to the rhythm and dynamics of fairy-tale narration.

Closing formulas, in turn, signal the completion of the plot and confirm the new status of the protagonist. They also return the listener from the imaginary world of the fairy tale to ordinary reality. Therefore, traditional formulas should not be regarded as merely decorative elements. They function as compositional boundaries and transitional mechanisms within the narrative structure.

3.3. *Phraseological units in Karakalpak folk tales*

Phraseological units play an important role in creating the figurative character of Karakalpak fairy-tale discourse. According to the examples identified in the source material, they can be divided into several semantic groups.

The expressions *kúnkóriw*, *turmiskeshiriw*, and *kúnkeshiriw* denote living and maintaining one's livelihood. Their function is not limited to conveying the general meaning of "to live." They also provide information about a character's social position, work, and living conditions. Thus, a relatively short expression can communicate a wider social and cultural context.

The expression *óldim-taldımdegende* describes the protagonist's difficult and exhausting journey. It emphasizes not only physical fatigue but also the severity of the trials experienced by the character.

The expressions *oñjağınashıǵıw* and *bawırınakiriw* characterize interpersonal relations and indicate the process of gaining another character's confidence or influencing their will.

The phrase *kózdenǵayıpbolıw* is particularly significant from a linguopoetic perspective. Although its literal meaning is associated with disappearance from sight, in the fairy tale *Qıpan* it also emphasizes the supernatural speed and magical power of the protagonist. Therefore, the phraseological unit contributes directly to the construction of the character's image.

Similarly, *birqasıqqanımnankeshseñ* expresses an appeal to save one's life and reveals relations between a ruler and a subordinate, or between powerful and weak characters. The expression *jerge-kókkesıymaydı* goes beyond the simple meaning of "many" and creates an epic hyperbolic effect.

These examples demonstrate that phraseological units in fairy tales function simultaneously at semantic, stylistic, and characterological levels.

3.4. *Karakalpak-Turkmen phraseological correspondence*

The comparison of Karakalpak and Turkmen phraseological units demonstrates considerable similarity. This can partly be explained by their common Turkic linguistic and historical background.

For example, the Turkmen fairy tale *Temmeýalta* contains the expression *günümigörmek* in the sentence *Eger men hammalçylyketmegimigoýsam, günüminähiligörerin?* [3: 3]. The expression is close to the Karakalpak *künkóriw* and denotes the idea of making a living or maintaining one's livelihood. Several other correspondences can be identified:

Karakalpak	Turkmen	Meaning
<i>künkóriw</i>	<i>gününigörmek</i>	to make a living
<i>kózdenğayıpbolıw</i>	<i>gözdenğayıpbolmak</i>	to disappear from sight
<i>başqosıw</i>	<i>başgoşmak</i>	to unite/establish a family
<i>ğamjeme</i>	<i>gamiýme</i>	do not worry
<i>göwninejağıw</i>	<i>göwnüneyaramak</i>	to be pleasing/acceptable

The similarity between these expressions indicates a common historical and linguistic foundation. Nevertheless, each phraseological unit must be examined within its specific textual context because formally similar expressions may acquire additional meanings depending on the narrative situation.

3.5. *Functional equivalence in English*

The comparison with English reveals a different type of correspondence. Not every Karakalpak or Turkmen phraseological unit has a literal English equivalent. Nevertheless, English possesses expressions that perform similar semantic and narrative functions. For example:

Karakalpak	Turkmen	English functional equivalent
<i>kúnkóriw</i>	<i>gününigörmek</i>	<i>make a living</i>
<i>kózdengayıpbolıw</i>	<i>gözdengayıpbolmak</i>	<i>vanish from sight</i>
<i>gamjeme</i>	<i>gamiýme</i>	<i>do not worry</i>
<i>birqasıqqanımnankeshseñ</i>	—	<i>spare my life</i>
<i>jerge-kókkesıymaydı</i>	<i>yere-gögesygmaz</i>	<i>as far as the eye could see</i>

The examples demonstrate that English equivalents are frequently based on functional rather than formal similarity. In other words, the same communicative or poetic effect may be achieved through completely different linguistic structures.

This observation is particularly important for comparative linguopoetics. A purely lexical comparison may incorrectly classify two expressions as unrelated simply because their forms differ. Their functions in the literary text, however, may be almost identical.

3.6. *Linguopoetic typology of traditional expressions*

On the basis of the analysis, two principal types of correspondence can be distinguished.

The first type includes **formal-semantic correspondence**, in which expressions in two languages demonstrate similarities both in structure and meaning. Such examples are particularly frequent in Karakalpak and Turkmen fairy tales.

The second type is **functional correspondence**, in which expressions have different lexical and grammatical structures but perform the same semantic or poetic function in the narrative. This type is particularly evident in comparisons between Turkic fairy-tale expressions and their English counterparts.

Accordingly, the linguopoetic value of a traditional expression should be determined through three interconnected dimensions: its lexical structure, its semantic content, and its function within the narrative composition.

The results indicate that traditional formulas create the genre framework of the fairy tale, whereas phraseological units

primarily contribute to characterization, emotional expression, imagery, and narrative intensity.

4. CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of Karakalpak, Turkmen, and English folk tales demonstrates that traditional formulas and phraseological units constitute important components of fairy-tale discourse. Opening formulas such as Karakalpak and Turkmen *Bir bar eken, birjoqeken* and English “Once upon a time” perform a common compositional function by introducing the listener into a fictional narrative world. At the same time, their internal semantic structures reflect different linguistic and cultural traditions.

Transitional formulas organize the movement of characters through time and space, while closing formulas mark the completion of the narrative and return the audience to ordinary reality. Phraseological units, in turn, provide concise and expressive representations of characters' social conditions, emotional states, relationships, actions, and supernatural abilities.

The comparison of Karakalpak and Turkmen expressions demonstrates significant structural and semantic proximity, which can be associated with their common Turkic linguistic and cultural background. English expressions more frequently demonstrate functional rather than formal equivalence.

Therefore, comparative research of fairy-tale language should not be restricted to literal lexical correspondence. The compositional, semantic, stylistic, and linguopoetic functions of traditional expressions should also be taken into consideration. Such an approach makes it possible to identify both universal principles of fairy-tale discourse and the national-specific features reflected in the linguistic representation of folk narratives.

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