

Proper Names in Folk Tales as Carriers of Linguocultural Information

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ABSTRACT

The article examines proper names in folk tales as carriers of linguocultural information. It is shown that under conditions of folkloric typification, a name performs not only a nominative but also a meaning-forming function: it marks a character's social status, sets an axiological evaluation, reflects traditional notions of norm and deviation, and contributes to the opposition «one's own» versus «the other». The analysis of onomastic units—anthroponyms, toponyms, and zoonyms—makes it possible to identify stable models for encoding cultural meanings and to explain their role in organizing the tale text. The research material includes Russian and Uzbek folk tales, which allows the author to outline both universal and nationally specific features of tale nomination.

Keywords: Onomastics, onomasticon, folk tale, proper name, anthroponym, toponym, zoonym, linguoculturology, cultural code, folklore poetics, axiology

INTRODUCTION

A folk tale as a folklore genre is built on the recurrence of plot patterns, stable character roles, and formulaic expression. In such conditions, a proper name acquires increased semantic and pragmatic weight: it functions as a short formula for an image, replacing an extended description. For the addressee – listener or reader – the name activates a recognition mechanism: who is

before us hero, antihero, or helper, what type of behavior is expected, and what moral evaluation is implied. A linguocultural approach makes it possible to consider the tale onomasticon not as a set of random nominations but as a sign system that fixes values and cultural scenarios of a people. A comparative analysis of Russian and Uzbek traditions enables the identification of common folklore universals (typification, evaluativity, one's own or the other) as well as nationally specific emphases (titles, social roles, and cultural models of space).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The object of the study is proper names in the text of the folk tale as elements of the onomasticon – anthroponyms, toponyms, and zoonyms – functioning in Russian and Uzbek tale traditions.

The following methods are used:

1. **Descriptive method** (collection, systematization, and classification of onomastic units);
2. **Structural-semantic analysis** (identification of name motivation, evaluativity, word-formation features, and inner form);
3. **Functional-pragmatic analysis** (the role of the name in character portrayal, composition, and the addressee's expectation mechanisms);
4. **Linguocultural analysis** (interpretation of cultural meanings and value dominants fixed in nomination);
5. **Comparative method** (comparison of Russian and Uzbek examples to distinguish universal and nationally specific features).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It has been established that the tale onomasticon forms three key subsystems: anthroponymic, toponymic, and zoonymic [1]. Each subsystem encodes different types of linguocultural information and performs specific functions within the text.

Table 1. *Onomasticon subsystems and their leading functions*

| Subsystem | What is named | Key functions | What linguocultural information is conveyed |
|--------------|--|---|---|
| Anthroponyms | characters (humans and anthropomorphic beings) | identification; evaluation; role typification; social marking | values (good or evil), social hierarchy, behavioral standards |
| Toponyms | tale space (places, routes, boundaries) | world-modeling; one's own or the other; compositional mapping | cultural worldview, notions of safe or dangerous, sacred or profane |
| Zoonyms | animal characters; sometimes named helpers | symbolization; evaluation; role in trial or help | stable cultural symbols, moral templates, masks of behavior |

The tale avoids psychological detailing; therefore, the name often replaces a descriptive block. On the material of Russian and Uzbek tales, three stable mechanisms are observed:

1. Role or status instead of a personal name (social-kinship nomination);
2. Nickname-based, evaluative nomination;
3. Name plus a constant epithet.

These models ensure genre economy and make characters readily recognizable.

Table 2. *The anthroponym as a carrier of cultural information*

| Model | Typical form in the text | What is encoded | Linguocultural effect |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Role or status instead of a name | tsar, khan, old man, poor man | hierarchy, behavioral norm, obligations | the addressee understands the character's frame in advance |
| Speaking nickname | Name or nickname with evaluation | moral evaluation, behavior forecast | axiology is reinforced: good or evil is built into the name |
| Name + epithet | name with a constant characteristic | stable type | genre recognizability and economy of description |

In the collected material, a particularly productive mechanism is one in which a proper name is reinforced by a status frame (shah, tsar, prince) or by an evaluative characteristic such as cruel [2]. As a result, a cultural formula is formed, which simultaneously encodes social hierarchy and the moral perspective of the text.

Table 3. *Examples of anthroponyms as carriers of linguocultural information (Russian and Uzbek folk tales)*

| Tradition | Tale | Anthroponym | Context (status or accompaniment) | Type of cultural information | Function in the text |
|-----------|---|-------------|--|---|--|
| Uzbek | Zokir (a cruel shah) | Zokir | a cruel shah | power + negative evaluation (cruelty as an anti-value) | prognostic; axiological |
| Uzbek | Sarvigul (the tsar and the maidservant) | Sarvigul | opposition tsar - maidservant | Gender or social role; status inequality; value conflict | social-marking; plot-organizing |
| Russian | Nikanor the bogatyr | Nikanor | constant status «bogatyr» | ideal of strength or protector; heroic code | typifying (hero); positive evaluation |
| Russian | The Prince and His Uncle (Attendant) | Vanka | in proximity to prince and uncle/attendant | contrast between a simple name and a high environment; social hierarchy | pragmatic (effect of closeness); compositional |

Table 4. *(Name + status) as a formula of the cultural code*

| Formula | What is encoded | How it is interpreted by the addressee | Genre effect |
|--|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| Zokir + cruel shah | power as a source of threat; cruelty as an anti-value | expect conflict, trial, restoration of justice | rapid entry into a moral opposition |
| Sarvigul + tsar/maidservant (contrast) | social vertical; gender and status | expect a plot about inequality, testing of authority, dignity of the low | increased dramatic tension |

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|---|--|--|--|
| Nikanor + bogatyr | ideal of a hero or protector | expect trials of strength and morality, the hero's victory | hero typification |
| Vanka + environment of prince/attendant | one's own or simple within a system of power | expect a folk effect and possible inverted hierarchy | contrast and heightened expressiveness |

The toponymy of the tale structures artistic space and reflects a cultural model of the world. One's own space (home, native land) is marked as a zone of norm and safety; the other (forest, mountains, distant country) as a zone of trials; and threshold loci (road, crossing, doorstep) function as places of transition and plot turns [3].

Table 5. *Spatial markers and meaning*

| Spatial type | Typical designation in tales | Meaning | Function in the plot |
|--------------|--|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| One's own | Home or native land or settlement | norm, order, family | starting point and return |
| The other | Forest or distant country, mountains, desert | danger, trial, otherness | testing the hero, transformation |
| Threshold | Road, crossing, doorstep | status transition | turning points |

Zoonyms in the tale, as a rule, do not merely denote an animal: they integrate a character into a stable cultural stereotype and function as "semiotic labels" [4] that allow the addressee to quickly recognize a behavioral type and moral evaluation. Animals may act as helpers, testers, or tricksters, while the specific shades of symbolism depend on the national-cultural context.

A comparison of Russian and Uzbek tale nomination reveals universal mechanisms (typification, evaluativity, role-based nominations, and the one's own/the other opposition) as well as nationally specific emphases (the repertoire of titles and social designations, dominant cultural scenarios, and the frequency of naming models).

CONCLUSION

Proper names in the folk tale are carriers of linguocultural information and realize a set of functions: nominative, characterizing, axiological, compositional, and prognostic. Anthroponyms, toponyms, and zoonyms form an onomasticon as a sign system that reflects cultural stereotypes, value dominants, and the worldview of traditional culture. The examples “Zokir - a cruel shah,” “Sarvigul (the tsar and the maidservant),” “Nikanor the bogatyr,” and “Vanka (in the tale about the prince and his attendant)” show that combining a name with a title or role and an evaluative characteristic forms a stable “cultural formula”: it simultaneously marks social hierarchy and the moral perspective of the text. A perspective for further research is expanding the corpus and quantitatively verifying the identified tendencies.

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