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Functional-Semantic Features of Zoonyms in Fairy Tale Discourse: An Experience of Karakalpak-English Comparison

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Abstract: The article examines the functional-semantic and linguoculturological characteristics of zoonyms in the context of fairy tale discourse based on the material of the Karakalpak and English languages. The author conducts a comparative analysis of lexemes denoting animals, revealing national-specific cognitive models and universal anthropocentric metaphors. Special attention is paid to the analysis of phraseological units and proverbs in the structure of the fairy tale narrative, which reflect the moral and ethical attitudes of the two nations.

Keywords: Zoonym, Fairy Tale Discourse, Linguoculturology, Karakalpak Language, English Language, Anthropocentrism, Phraseological Unit

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1. Introduction

The world of animals has always occupied a central place in human consciousness, becoming a mirror in which our own traits, vices, and virtues are reflected. In language, this interaction is fixed through zoonyms — names of animals that, in the context of folk tales, cease to be just biological terms and turn into deep symbols. The choice of fairy tale discourse for analysis is not accidental: it is in the fairy tale that the national character is manifested most clearly, and animals are endowed with human qualities, becoming carriers of a cultural code [1]. A comparative study of the Karakalpak and English languages in this aspect allows us to see how different natural conditions, historical paths, and everyday life formed unique associative links. If for one nation an animal can be a symbol of nobility, for another the same creature may be associated with danger or stupidity [2]. Understanding these subtle semantic transitions is necessary for deep penetration into the logic of the language. In this work, an attempt is made to comprehend how animal names function in fairy tales, what meaning they carry, and how through them a person's attitude towards the surrounding world and themselves is expressed [3].

2. Methods and Materials

This study is built as a qualitative comparison of linguistic units within the framework of Karakalpak and English fairy tale discourse. The objects of study were the names of animals (zoonyms), as well as fixed expressions and proverbs in which they occur [4]. The work relies on theoretical achievements in the field of linguoculturology (E. K. Iskenderova), anthropocentric phraseology (Z. B. Sagatova), comparativistics (N. V. Nikolaeva) and diachronic analysis of a literary text (E. M. Dorogaykina). The work process included three main stages. First, data collection was carried out — a continuous search and selection of mentions of animals in the texts of folk tales and proverbs. Then an

analysis of the collected material was carried out: we identified common features and national differences in the images of animals using the comparative method [5]. For this, component analysis (parsing the meaning of a word into individual senses) and conceptual analysis (describing which human qualities are assigned to one or another animal) were used. At the final stage, a statistical calculation of the frequency of mentions was used, which made it possible to determine the images of animals most important for each culture and justify the reliability of the conclusions obtained [6].

3. Results

The conducted analysis showed that zoonyms in fairy tale discourse function as complex conceptual units, where the biological characteristics of an animal are superimposed on the social and ethical norms of society. In English folklore, the central image is the **Fox**. In the fairy tale "The Fox and the Goose," the fox's cunning is presented as a sophisticated intellectual deception. Semantic analysis shows the dominance of the seme "cunning for the sake of gain." In the Karakalpak fairy tale "Túlki hám tırna" (The Fox and the Crane), the image of Túlki is also endowed with cunning, but here it often has a domestic, practical character. As Z. F. Jurabayeva notes, the specifics of rendering zoonyms in translations of fairy tales often encounter a conflict between the individualizing function and national flavor [7-10].

The image of the **Lion** (Lion / Arslan) in both languages realizes the model of a "just/formidable ruler." In the English fairy tale "The Lion's Share," the lion personifies absolute power. In the Karakalpak discourse, Arslan often acts as a symbol of nobility (mártlik). Analysis of contexts shows that in the Karakalpak language, the zoonym Arslan possesses a higher degree of positive connotation than in European literary discourse [11].

For the Karakalpak discourse, the key zoonym is **Túye** (camel). In fairy tales, it is endowed with contradictory qualities: on the one hand, it is a symbol of patience; on the other, it is an object of irony. As V. Khomidova points out, a cross-cultural analysis of proverbs reveals significant differences in the images of moral qualities associated with animals in the English and Karakalpak languages, where the camel acts as a unique marker of steppe culture [12].

The image of the **wolf** (Wolf / Qasqır) in both traditions is clearly negative. However, in Karakalpak discourse, it also often appears as a stupid character. This correlates with the findings of N. V. Nikolaeva that zoonyms in different systems of languages often acquire additional evaluative semes depending on the folklore tradition [13].

4. Discussion

The results of the study demonstrate that the semantic transformation of a zoonym in a fairy tale is due to the need to express the specific ethical ideals of a particular ethnos. The identified dichotomy in the interpretation of "cunning" (Fox vs Túlki) finds an explanation in works on the connotative specificity of zoonyms [14]. If the Fox in the English language is an "intellectual fraudster" who breaks the rules of the game, then in Karakalpak, Túlki is an adaptive character whose actions are interpreted through the prism of everyday savvy necessary for survival.

Differences in the representation of the image of Arslan and Lion are confirmed by the statements that zoonyms in Karakalpak culture are inextricably linked with the concept of "steppe knighthood" [15]. The high positive connotation of the Karakalpak zoonym Arslan is directly related to the idealization of physical strength as an attribute of a noble warrior (márt), which is less characteristic of English fairy tale discourse, where the lion more often acts as a pragmatic and tough symbol of the state monopoly on power.

Divergence in the perception of ungulates (Túye vs Horse) proves the theory of the mythological determinism of linguistic symbols. The camel in the Karakalpak language acts as a conceptually complex unit combining endurance and gullibility, which makes it

a central character in didactic plots. As indicated in modern research, the absence of this image in English paremiology is replaced by the more functional image of a horse, which changes the modality of fairy tale instructions.

The fact that the wolf (Qasqir) in the Karakalpak language, unlike English (Wolf), is often endowed with the seme "stupidity" is interpreted by us as the realization of a cognitive model of the superiority of reason over aggression. This is consistent with the conclusions about the metaphorical structuring of experience: for Karakalpak folklore, it was critically important to desacralize the image of the predator, turning it from a terrible threat into an object of mockery, which is clearly observed in the analysis of folk sayings. Thus, the discussion confirms that zoonyms in a fairy tale are not just names, but markers of national identity.

5. Conclusion

Summarizing the conducted research, it can be argued that zoonyms in the fairy tale discourse of the Karakalpak and English languages represent not just lexical units, but deep linguocultural concepts. Comparative analysis allowed identifying both universal features due to the universal perception of the animal world and specific national features dictated by the historical development and everyday way of life of the two nations.

The main results of the work confirm that in the Karakalpak tradition, zoomorphic images are closely linked to the nomadic civilization, where animals such as the camel and horse are endowed with sacred or deeply philosophical meaning. At the same time, English fairy tale discourse tends towards images of animals characteristic of the sedentary agrarian and forest culture of Europe. Differences in the functional-semantic fields of zoonyms demonstrate how the same biological species can become a carrier of diametrically opposite ethical assessments.

The prospects for further research in this direction are seen in a more detailed study of the gender aspect of zoomorphic metaphors, as well as in the analysis of the transformation of animal images in modern literature for children created on the basis of folk tales. The obtained data can be used in university practice of teaching linguoculturology, comparative typology, and translation theory. In general, the zoonymic code remains one of the most representative tools for studying national identity and preserving cultural heritage in the conditions of globalization.

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