LINGUO-CULTURAL REPRESENTATION OF FEMALE ARCHETYPES IN UZBEK AND FRENCH FOLK TALES

Avezberdiyeva Nafisa Komuljonovna

PhD student at Urgench State University named after Abu Rayhon Beruni

nafisa.avezberdiyeva.87@mail.ru

Abstract: This paper investigates the linguo-cultural representation of female archetypes in Uzbek and French folk tales. Using the theoretical framework of linguoculturology and gender linguistics, the study analyzes how linguistic means—epithets, metaphors, and onomastic elements—reflect cultural perceptions of womanhood. The research focuses on four tales: Zumrad and Qimmat, Cinderella, Peau d'Ane, and Sleeping Beauty. Through comparative textual analysis, the study identifies three dominant archetypes—the virtuous maiden, the mother, and the witch—and reveals how language encodes moral and aesthetic values. Findings show that while both Uzbek and French traditions share universal motifs of beauty and morality, they differ in their linguistic symbolism and in the moral hierarchy attached to female images.

Keywords: female archetype, linguo-cultural analysis, Uzbek folk tales, French folk tales, gender linguistics, symbolism

Introduction

Folk tales are among the oldest verbal art forms that express the collective imagination, values, and worldviews of a people. Within this imaginative world, women's images occupy a central position, embodying ideals of beauty, virtue, motherhood, and sometimes danger. Each culture encodes these archetypes linguistically, transmitting moral and aesthetic values through recurring symbols and expressions [Warner, 1994].

The comparison between Uzbek and French folk traditions is especially revealing because both share a moral-didactic nature yet stem from distinct cultural backgrounds. Uzbek tales emphasize communal ethics, patience, and kindness (Mamasoli, 2015), whereas French tales, particularly those adapted by Charles Perrault, elevate grace, refinement, and destiny [Zipes, 2000].

The aim of this study is to examine how female archetypes are linguistically and culturally represented in selected Uzbek and French folk tales. The research explores what linguistic means (epithets, metaphors, onomastics) reveal about each society's vision of femininity, and how these linguistic patterns reflect underlying cultural values.

Methods

This study applies a comparative linguo-cultural method combining structural, semantic, and symbolic analysis. Four tales were selected as the corpus: the Uzbek tale Zumrad va Qimmat and the French tales Cinderella, Peau d'Ane, and Sleeping Beauty.

The analysis proceeded in three stages:

1. Textual identification of female figures and linguistic units (epithets, metaphors, and proper names) used to describe them.

2. Semantic interpretation of these linguistic markers within the cultural context of each tradition.

3. Comparative evaluation of recurring archetypal motifs, moral functions, and symbolic structures.

The theoretical framework is based on Propp's Morphology of the Folktale (1968) for structural functions, Veselovsky's (1989) ideas of historical poetics, and the gender-cultural interpretations of Warner (1994) and von Franz (1996).

Results

1. The Virtuous Maiden

In Zumrad va Qimmat, the heroine Zumrad is portrayed through epithets and metaphors emphasizing moral beauty: oy yuzli ("bright-faced"), ko'ngli pok ("pure-hearted"). These expressions linguistically unite physical beauty with ethical purity. Similarly, in Cinderella, the heroine is described as gentle, graceful, and radiant. The semantic field of light—bright, pure, shining—constructs an image of transcendental virtue [Warner, 1994]. Both cultures idealize the virtuous maiden as the moral axis of the tale.

2. The Maternal Figure

In Uzbek folklore, the mother embodies spiritual strength and self-sacrifice. Expressions such as oq yürekli ona ("pure-hearted mother") and mehribon ona ("compassionate mother") serve as cultural markers of reverence (Mamasoli, 2015). In French tales, however, the maternal figure often appears as absent or replaced by a fairy godmother, as in Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty. The linguistic shift from mother to godmother (marraine) suggests a symbolic transformation from biological motherhood to divine protection [Zipes, 2000].

3. The Witch or Stepmother

The archetype of the witch (sehrgar kampir) or stepmother (o'gay ona) functions as the moral antagonist. In Zumrad va Qimmat, she is described as yovuz, achchiq tilli ("sharp-tongued"), and ko'ngli qora ("black-hearted"). The lexical choice links moral corruption with darkness and speech aggression. In Peau d'Ane and Sleeping Beauty, equivalent terms such as wicked fairy and evil enchantress encode the same moral dichotomy between light and darkness [von Franz, 1996].

Discussion

The comparative analysis reveals both universal and culture-specific features in the linguistic representation of female archetypes.

Both Uzbek and French tales utilize polar symbolism—light vs. darkness, beauty vs. ugliness, kindness vs. cruelty—to construct moral order [Propp, 1968]. However, the cultural semantics of these symbols differ. In Uzbek tales, beauty and kindness are associated with

harmony with nature, humility, and communal ethics. In French tales, beauty and virtue signify refinement, divine grace, and individual transcendence [Warner, 1994].

The onomastic analysis also reveals differences: Uzbek names like Zumrad ("emerald") connote purity and moral clarity, while French names such as Cendrillon ("little ashes") suggest transformation through suffering and redemption. Language thus functions as a mirror of cultural consciousness, reflecting how femininity is morally and aesthetically constructed.

Moreover, the negative female archetypes—stepmothers and witches—express collective fears of female power and autonomy. Both cultures employ linguistically marked antagonists to reinforce the moral framework of obedience and virtue, though in differing social contexts [Zipes, 2000].

Conclusion

This study concludes that female archetypes in Uzbek and French folk tales, while shaped by universal human psychology, carry distinct linguistic and cultural signatures. Through epithets, metaphors, and symbolic imagery, both traditions reflect their societies' moral and aesthetic ideals.

Uzbek tales emphasize ethical purity and harmony with nature; French tales highlight beauty, grace, and transformation. The linguo-cultural analysis demonstrates that language does not simply describe women - it constructs their archetypal meaning within the moral imagination of each culture.

Future research could explore pragmatic and discourse aspects, such as speech acts and communicative roles, to deepen understanding of gendered linguistic patterns in oral traditions.

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