

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF FOLKLORISM IN UZBEK LITERATURE

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Abstract. This article provides a comprehensive analysis of the theoretical and practical directions of folklorism studies in Uzbek literature. The formation of scholarly concepts of folklorism in the second half of the twentieth century and the early twenty-first century is examined through a historical-dialectical approach. Particular attention is given to Bahodir Sarimsoqov's clarification of folklorism-related terminology, Laylo Sharipova's systematization of poetic and aesthetic criteria, as well as the interdisciplinary genre analyses conducted by Saodat Mamayusupova, Dilduza Hajiyeva, F. Kurbanova, and S. Atajanov, all of which are consistently examined within the framework of modern folklorism studies.

The research evaluates the artistic reinterpretation of folklore elements—such as motifs, images, archetypes, rituals, proverbs, sayings, and vernacular speech structures—during their transition into written literature as forms of creative synthesis, poetic modification, and rhythmic-compositional renewal. The findings demonstrate that folklorism in Uzbek literature has evolved not merely as a decorative artistic element, but as a central aesthetic category that renews national artistic thinking and harmonizes the folk spirit with modern poetic systems.

Keywords: folklorism, mythopoetics, ethnographic folklorism, compositional folklorism, oral folk literature, artistic interpretation, national artistic thinking, literary process.

Introduction

In the history of Uzbek literary studies, the relationship between folklore and written literature has consistently remained one of the central scholarly directions. Oral folk creativity, as the foundation of national culture and an integral part of historical memory, has played a crucial role in the formation and development of written literature. Consequently, folklorism—that is, the phenomenon of the rebirth of oral folk elements in written literature through new artistic functions—has become one of the stable scholarly categories in Uzbek literary criticism.

From the second half of the twentieth century, especially during the 1970s–1980s, a scientific conception of folklorism began to take shape in Uzbek literature. During this period, the poetic functions of folklore elements, their artistic reinterpretation, their place in the writer's creative thinking, and their role within compositional structures were increasingly interpreted on the basis of clearly defined scholarly criteria. In particular, the theoretical views of Bahodir Sarimsoqov, who introduced terminological precision [1], and Laylo Sharipova's analyses of modern poetry [2], contributed to the establishment of folklorism as an independent scholarly field in Uzbek literary studies. Subsequently, researchers such as S. Atajanov [3], D. Hajiyeva [4], F. Kurbanova [5], and S. Mamayusupova [6] expanded this academic domain by analyzing the functional aspects of folklore elements across lyric, epic, and dramatic genres.



An overview of the study of folklorism in Uzbek literature shows that this phenomenon has not been interpreted merely as “folklore traces” or “folklore influence.” On the contrary, it has been understood as a conscious creative choice within the author’s artistic thinking, an important principle in the construction of artistic structure, and a means of expressing the national spirit in a renewed form. When motifs, images, intonations, proverbs, expressions, and other elements of oral folk creativity are transferred into written literature, they acquire new artistic meanings. In literary studies, this process is explained through terms such as “creative synthesis,” “artistic rebirth,” and “artistic modification.”

Bahodir Sarimsoqov defines the essence of folklorism not as the simple transfer of folklore material into a literary text, but as its artistic rebirth [1, p. 349]. According to the scholar, folklorism represents an artistic whole newly constructed by the author through the reinterpretation of folklore elements in accordance with creative intent.

Sharipova, in turn, highlights the specifically creative nature of folklorism and clearly distinguishes it from the concept of “folklore influence” [2, p. 12]. She argues that folklorism is an artistic structure reshaped within the writer’s consciousness, harmonized with the poetic system, and adapted to the internal aesthetic laws of the text.

The manifestation of folklorism in literature takes diverse forms across poetry, short stories, drama, epic narratives, and modern prose. For example, in Shukur Xolmirzayev’s short stories, social and ethnographic folklorism is transformed into a natural poetic representation of folk games, everyday customs, and details of daily life. In Erkin Vohidov’s poetry written in aruz and syllabic meters, folk rhythm, expressions, and didactic elements are harmonized with modern interpretation. In the short stories of Isajon Sultan, mythopoetic images, spatial semantics, and moral–ethical foundations transform folklorism into a more complex artistic system.

This scholarly article provides a consistent and comprehensive analysis of the history of folklorism studies in Uzbek literature, its theoretical foundations, and its practical poetic manifestations. By examining the research of B. Sarimsoqov, L. Sharipova, S. Atajanov, D. Hajiyeva, F. Kurbanova, and S. Mamayusupova, the study aims to illuminate the place of folklorism within the literary process in an integrated manner.

Methodology

This research is aimed at systematizing the formation and development of folklorism in Uzbek literary studies from both theoretical and practical perspectives. The relationship between folklore and literature is considered as a historical process, and the views of B. Sarimsoqov, L. Sharipova, D. Hajiyeva, F. Kurbanova, and S. Mamayusupova are analyzed using a comparative-historical approach.

For each period, scholarly definitions, classifications, and methodological approaches to folklorism were evaluated within their historical contexts. Various forms of folklorism (simple, complex, stylistic-speech, compositional, ethnographic, and mythopoetic) were reclassified based on examples from Uzbek literature. The typologies proposed by B. Sarimsoqov and L. Sharipova were taken as the primary models.



Based on the observations of D. Hajiyeva, F. Kurbanova, and S. Mamayusupova, the role of folklore elements in character formation, plot construction, the shaping of folk-style speech, and rhythmic and intonational systems was reinterpreted through linguo-poetic approaches.

The creator's personality, the spirit of the time, national thinking, and historical conditions were contextually analyzed as the main factors influencing the interpretation of folklore elements.

Results

This section consistently systematizes the concepts of folklorism formed in Uzbek literary studies, the interconnections among major scholarly schools, and the applied results achieved by various researchers. While the theoretical foundations of folklorism were laid in the works of Sarimsoqov and Sharipova, subsequent influential studies enriched these ideas through analyses of different genres and artistic schools. The results demonstrate that folklorism in Uzbek literature has developed as a complex, multidimensional artistic and aesthetic phenomenon.

Bahodir Sarimsoqov is recognized as the scholar who laid the foundation for the formation of folklorism as an independent scholarly category in Uzbek literary studies. Three key outcomes are clearly evident in his research:

1. Terminological clarity.

B. Sarimsoqov defines folklorism as “the purposeful incorporation of elements of oral folk creativity into a literary work by an author through a specific artistic ‘treatment,’” thereby sharply distinguishing it from folklore influence or folklore traditions [1, p. 349]. This clarification was subsequently adopted as a theoretical foundation in later studies.

2. Distinction between folklorism and folklorization.

Sarimsoqov establishes a clear scholarly criterion whereby folklorism refers to the transition from folklore to literature, whereas folklorization denotes the movement from literature into oral folk tradition.

3. Creation of a typological model.

One of Sarimsoqov's most significant contributions is his classification of folklorism into the following forms:

- simple folklorism
- complex folklorism (analytical, synthetic, stylizational)

This typology became the principal theoretical framework for subsequent research.

Laylo Sharipova is widely recognized as a scholar who studied folklorism in depth as an aesthetic phenomenon. Her scholarly conclusions are comprehensive and form a methodological foundation for modern folklorism studies. Building on Sarimsoqov's concept of “secondary revival,” Sharipova defines folklorism as “the artistic integration and reinterpretation of phenomena characteristic of folklore samples into written literature under the influence of folklore” [2, p. 13]. This approach made it possible to interpret folklorism not as a mere “trace of folklore,” but as an integral component of the entire poetic system. She also emphasizes the aesthetic functions of folklore elements in rhythm, intonation, repetition, and syntactic structure. By actively introducing the concept of **compositional folklorism** into scholarly discourse, she provided a new methodological impulse to literary studies. In addition, based on A. A. Gorelov's classification, the term **social-ethnographic folklorism** was introduced into Uzbek literary



criticism. This concept serves as a key criterion for analyzing the poetic functions of customs, games, rituals, and everyday details within literary texts.

Saodat Mamayusupova, drawing on the short stories of Shukur Xolmirzayev, examined the life-based, natural, and everyday artistic manifestations of folklorism [6]. She substantiated that folk games and customs—such as Chillak, Quloqcho‘zma, and Qoziq uchdi—perform important artistic functions, including the creation of national color, the advancement of the plot, and the revelation of character traits. She also analyzed the role of curses, blessings, proverbs, and folk expressions in conveying the psychological states of characters’ speech. As a result, folklorism was demonstrated to be one of the key artistic mechanisms of short story poetics.

In the research of S. Atajanov, all types of folklorism employed in the lyrics of Erkin Samandar were revealed, particularly the role of simple folklorisms in ensuring artistic expressiveness. The poet’s skillful use of proverbs, sayings, folk expressions, curses, blessings, as well as analytical, stylizational, and synthetic folklorisms, was substantiated through textual examples [3].

Dilfuza Hajiyeva analyzed the rhythmic, structural, and semantic layers of folklorism in the works of Erkin Vohidov and identified the following:

- E. Vohidov harmonized the intonation of folk songs, the tone of proverbs and aphorisms, and national rhythm within the framework of aruz poetics.
- In “The Golden Wall,” didactic elements, humor, and folk quotations became the structural core of the dramatic composition.

In syllabic (barmoq) verse, folk expressions, phraseological layers, proverbs, and idiomatic phrases appear with a natural poetic polish. E. Vohidov’s folklorism is evaluated as a modern synthesis of classical lyricism and folk aesthetics [4].

F. Kurbanova studied the interrelation of folklore elements in the short stories of Isajon Sultan—mythologemes, spatial semantics, ritual symbols, and Sufi allusions—and determined that these works possess a complex poetic system [5]. The study substantiates that the motifs of journey, trial, dream, and pilgrimage drive the plot, reveal the protagonist’s inner world, and deepen artistic semantics.

The researcher also demonstrates that archetypes and mythologemes such as saints, the white snake, fish, and supernatural beings (dev–pari) found in stories like “Xazinabon,” “Qo‘riqchi,” and “Avliyo” represent written interpretations of Uzbek mythopoetic thinking. Furthermore, the role of proverbs, sayings, prayers, and curses in revealing character psychology, strengthening national identity, and enriching textual semantics is convincingly argued.

The research results can be summarized as follows:

1. Folklorism has been fully established as a theoretical category in Uzbek literary studies.
2. Sharipova and Sarimsoqov provided the scientific foundation and terminological clarity for this category.
3. The practical manifestations of folklorism have expanded across various genres (short story, poetry, drama, modern prose).
4. New approaches such as mythopoetic, ethnographic, and compositional folklorism have emerged.



5. The contemporary literary process presents folklorism as a key aesthetic mechanism for expressing national identity.

Discussion

The results indicate that folklorism has become one of the active directions of national artistic thinking characteristic of Uzbek literature. Although various scholars—from B. Sarimsoqov to S. Mamayusupova—interpret the process of transferring folklore elements into written literature from different perspectives, their views converge on one point: folklorism is never a simple “transfer,” but rather a creative rebirth. The Discussion section analyzes the convergence and divergence of these approaches and reveals the comprehensive essence of folklorism as an artistic system.

Sarimsoqov’s scholarly views consolidated folklorism as a theoretical category. According to him, a folklore element enters a literary work precisely in a “recreated” form. This approach is based on two important theoretical premises:

1. A folklore element does not exist in a text in a ready-made form. The writer perceives it, reinterprets it, and transforms it in accordance with their artistic worldview. This artistic mechanism endows the text with new meanings, new semantic interpretations, and new functional roles.
2. Folklorism is the internal energy of literature. Folklore elements propel the plot, deepen character development, awaken the national spirit, and expand the semantic dimensions of the text.

Thus, folklorism is not only a matter of content, but also a structural, poetic, and aesthetic principle of literature.

L. Sharipova’s views occupy a central place in the discussion, as folklorism becomes an integral component of the poetic system. She considers folklore elements to be the core that determines rhythmic, compositional, syntactic, and image-forming principles within the text. This approach allows folklorism to be interpreted as a constituent part of the entire artistic system. Rituals, games, and customs are not merely descriptive details in the text, but represent a national model of reality, ethno-cultural memory, and the product of folk thinking. In this sense, Sharipova’s approach presents folklorism as a phenomenon with profound socio-cultural significance.

While studying the short stories of Shukur Xolmirzayev, S. Mamayusupova identifies the natural use of folk games, curses, blessings, and everyday details as evidence that folklorism functions as a vital and organic phenomenon. She also demonstrates that folk elements serve as important artistic tools for expressing internal conflicts and psychological transformations of characters, revealing the broad functional potential of folklorism.

S. Atajanov, examining Erkin Samandar’s works, analyzes simple, stylizational, and synthetic forms of folklorism and substantiates their role in ensuring artistic expressiveness. The study highlights the author’s skillful use of proverbs, sayings, folk expressions, curses and blessings, as well as phonopoetic devices, evaluating them as means that enhance artistic expression in both poetic and prose texts. In works such as “Sultan Jaloliddin,” “Qiron g’ildiragi,” and “Quyuni izlari yoki Ogahiy,” the significance of image and genre stylization, along with mythological



symbols in revealing national character, is demonstrated, and the compositional function of analytical folklorisms is identified.

D. Hajiyeva, in her study of Erkin Vohidov's творчество, shows that folklore rhythm used in aruz and syllabic systems becomes a powerful poetic force determining the musicality and elegance of verse. In her analysis of the drama "The Golden Wall," she establishes that folk humor, aphorisms, and quotations strengthen the composition, deepen dramatic conflict, and define the ideological center, thereby proving that folklorism possesses high functional potential not only in prose but also in the dramatic genre.

In F. Kurbanova's research, folklore elements in Isajon Sultan's short stories are shown to function as a mythological layer, a psychological mechanism, a compositional node, and a system of symbolic semantics. The motifs of journey, trial, dream, and death-rebirth are interpreted as key drivers of the protagonist's spiritual transformation. Spaces such as the Garden of Eram, mountains, rivers, and teahouses are interpreted not as mere settings, but as sites of spiritual trial and loci of memory, revealing their mythopoetic essence. Prayers, blessings, and curses are emphasized as folk speech acts that meaningfully influence the fate of characters.

Summarizing the role of folklorism in the scholarly and literary process, it can be stated that in the works of Sarimsoqov, Sharipova, and Mamayusupova, folklorism gradually deepened from a theoretical concept into a poetic system and subsequently into a life-based artistic image. In the studies of Sharipova, Hajiyeva, and Kurbanova, folklorism evolved from a structural-aesthetic phenomenon into a rhythmic-compositional mechanism and a mythopoetic-semiotic system. This process demonstrates that folklorism studies have become a consistent and firmly established scholarly field within Uzbek literary studies.

Overall analyses confirm that folklorism plays a crucial role in expressing national mentality, shaping historical memory, preserving the continuity of folk thinking, and linking tradition with modernity in Uzbek literature. Folklorism nationalizes the literary process, expands artistic thinking, and revives the folk spirit in modern forms. As a result, it revitalizes myths, symbols, images, rituals, and customs through new artistic interpretations, becoming a fundamental artistic principle that connects poets and writers with the collective experience of the people.

Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the process of studying folklorism in Uzbek literature from theoretical, methodological, and poetic-practical perspectives. The findings demonstrate that folklorism in Uzbek literary studies is not an isolated literary phenomenon, but rather a major artistic category that reflects the continuous movement of national artistic thinking and the synthesis of folk memory with modern literary consciousness. The essence of this phenomenon was theoretically substantiated by Sarimsoqov, conceptually consolidated as a poetic system by Sharipova, and further enriched through interdisciplinary and inter-genre analyses by subsequent researchers.

Based on the research, the functions performed by folklorism in Uzbek literature at different stages can be summarized as follows:



- **Preservation and continuity of the genetic roots of national artistry.**
Elements of oral folk creativity have become the primary aesthetic markers of national identity in the literature of each period.
- **An integrative force in the development of the literary process.**
The synthesis of folklore and modern literary thinking has generated new poetic forms, symbols, rhythms, and structural approaches.
- **A powerful means of revealing individual psychology.**
Folk speech, prayers, blessings, curses, games, and rituals have served as essential tools for revealing character and inner worlds.
- **Enrichment of the mythopoetic layer in modern prose and poetry.**
Archetypes, mythologemes, and spatial semantics have contributed to the expansion of artistic thinking with new concepts and symbols.
- **Expansion of the social, aesthetic, and ethical functions of literature.**
Through folklorism, principles such as national education, spiritual purification, and the revitalization of historical memory have been actively manifested within the literary process.

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