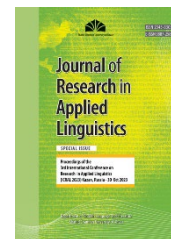




Shahid Chamran University  
of Ahvaz



## **A Comprehensive Analysis of the Reasons for the Inclusion of Folk Riddles in the Genre of English Fairy Tales**

**Nailya Ivanovna Faizullina<sup>1</sup>, Radif R. Zamaletdinov<sup>2</sup>, Rong Xu<sup>3</sup>, Hang Siwen<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Department of Russian Language and its Teaching Methods, Kazan Federal University, Kazan, Russia; [nelya7@mail.ru](mailto:nelya7@mail.ru)

<sup>2</sup> Department of General Linguistics and Turkology, Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, Kazan, Russia; [sovet.rus16@gmail.com](mailto:sovet.rus16@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup> Department of Russian Language and Methods of its Teaching, Kazan Federal University, Kazan, Russia; [rongxu2023@gmail.com](mailto:rongxu2023@gmail.com)

<sup>4</sup> Department of Russian Language and Methods of its Teaching, Kazan Federal University, Kazan, Russia; [hangsiwen2023@gmail.com](mailto:hangsiwen2023@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

The authors of the paper made an effort to provide a thorough examination of the rationale behind the incorporation of folk riddles into an English fairy tale, a more extensive form of folklore. The study looks at the main plot-forming motivations found in English fairy tales and evaluates the requirements for their inclusion in the story's text, including the motivation behind solving riddles. It has been shown that guessing frequently occurs in English fairy tales where a character needs to defend himself against an unfavorable action or, on the other hand, when someone wants to challenge themselves and turns to solving the riddle. Furthermore, it was discovered that the degree to which the guesser's initial presuppositions are actualized directly correlates with the guesser's success rate. This clause supports the notion that everyone who took part in the event had to be knowledgeable about a particular field in order for them to guess a riddle. This stance forms the foundation for the descriptive construction's potential disintegration. We frequently see the exact exclusion of the generality of presumption in English fairy tales, which makes it impossible to answer the given question. The problems with the denotation's secondary nomination are also covered in the article. It was discovered that the inclusion of the "good-evil" dichotomy is frequently the basis for the nomination in English fairy tales, which significantly broadens the scope of the inclusion of a potential denotation.

**Keywords:** Folk Riddle; English Language; English Fairy Tale.

### **1. Introduction**

Linguists and anthropologists are still interested in studying folklore discourse because it is still difficult to characterize it as a macrostructure made up of several smaller units, or small folklore genres, that can function both independently and in conjunction with one another (Byshev, 2018). Small folklore genres can be studied concurrently as an independent genre and within a macrostructure, such as English fairy tales, which opens up new avenues for research and reveals novel aspects of small genres and their roles in larger structures. When considering the structural characteristics of an English fairy tale, Propp (2022) highlighted the significance of its "important morphological elements," or the elements that in some way dictated how the English fairy tale plot developed (Senderovich, 2005).

These include, for instance, "questioning" someone in order to get the information or object that is needed. This is frequently presented as a riddle or an inevitable conversation in an English fairy tale. It's crucial to remember that solving a magic riddle by asking questions is frequently connected to displays of deception and creativity. Finding the answer during the questioning process is crucial because it both dictates how the story will progress and provides the impetus for one of the questioners to change. Everything mentioned above emphasizes how crucial a successful conclusion is, since failure to do so could result in one of the heroes dying. Most often, questioning is done in a veiled, allegoric manner. Allegory presents a significant challenge for the subject matter, but it also gives the hero a chance to demonstrate his creativity and knowledge.

## 2. Literature Review

With its fantastic themes, unusual medieval exempla, and fables, the anonymous collection *Novellino* (The Hundred Old Tales) suggested in the late thirteenth century that new literary genres were about to blossom, as did other medieval marvelous tales and reports. In the fourteenth century, writers such as Boccaccio and Chaucer helped pave the way for the establishment of the fairy tale as a distinct genre. They did not create "pure" fairy tales in the traditional sense, but many of their works—and they were not the only authors who had an impact on the genre's evolution—have elements of fairy tales, drawing from oral wonder tales and using fairy-tale motifs and structures. Furthermore, the frame narratives that they invented—a device that dates back to ancient India and was widely used in the Middle East long before Europeans appropriated it—allowed the introduction of a variety of tales told in a variety of modes and styles. Giovan Francesco Straparola used the frame in his *Le piacevoli notti*, and Giambattista Basile used it in *Lo cunto de li cunti*, also known as *Il Pentamerone* (1634–36), both of whom relied heavily on it to gather, edit, and produce some of the most notable literary fairy tales in the West, which would go on to influence prominent writers of the genre from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century (McCarthy, 2007; Davies, 2010).

It is important to remember that the majority of folktales and collections of fairy tales that were published in Great Britain during the 19th century were also created, if not pirated, in the US and Canada. Concurrently, renowned American author and editor Horace Scudder promoted European fairy tales in the *Riverside Magazine for Children* and released multiple anthologies for children between 1860 and 1890, including *Fables and Folk Stories* (1882); Thomas Frederick Crane, a language professor at Cornell and co-founder of the American Folklore Society, translated and edited *Italian Popular Tales* (1885); and hundreds of varieties of wonder tales (European, African, and American) were spread through oral tradition and printed materials during the nineteenth century, as William Bernard McCarthy eloquently and brilliantly illustrated in his anthology, *Cinderella in America: A Book of Folk and Fairy Tales*. Fairy tales were fully institutionalized in Europe and North America by the early 1900s, as evidenced by the enormous popularity and success of L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) and Barrie's *Peter Pan* (1904), as well as their numerous sequels in theater, cinema, and literature to this day.

The definition of the genre in any given era is determined by the interactions between the writer, publisher, and audience within that particular society. With the fairy tale, this has undoubtedly been the case. The way in which a particular writer chooses to engage with the discourse surrounding the genre as an institution will determine the literary fairy tale's aesthetics. According to Ryan (2003) and Zipes (2019), the fairy tale is unthinkable today without considering its dialectical relationship with other genres and media as well as its actual "absorption" of these genres and media. Such interventions bring about transformations in the institution itself and its relation to other institutions.

## 3. Methodology

To put the research into practice, we have used a wide variety of private and general scientific research techniques. Initially, the approach of contextual analysis of an English fairy tale text was used, allowing the riddle to be viewed as a structural component of the story. The linguistic content of the riddle was then analyzed, and the impact of the theme division on the linguistic means explication plan in the descriptive section of the riddle was evaluated. We were able to determine the linguistic and cultural national values through the method of semantic-cognitive analysis of the riddle. These values also significantly influence the level of explanation of the denotation description's constituent parts.

## 4. Results

The examination of English fairy tales where the questioning scenario is central to the storyline development of the tale as a whole is the focus of this article. We'll look at several English fairy tales where morphological elements, such as riddles, are present. One characteristic of the studied English fairy tales is not only the ability to solve a riddle but also the demonstration of a strong link between the story's description and actual occurrences. We think that this kind of presentation logic and the general existence of these riddles point to the genre's unrestricted inclusion in a person's daily life during the formative years. Furthermore, understanding the original circumstance and its subsequent fixation in the riddle's text enables us to unveil every new facet of the riddle as a distinct folklore genre. First of all, the analysis of the riddle inside the context of an English fairy tale highlights how crucial it is for the man who tells the riddle and the man who guesses to share common presuppositions. Because the person making the guess is unable to decipher the description they have been given due to a lack of unity in perception. However, because what was described occurred "before the

narrator's eyes," the telling person might find the description of the denotation to be quite natural and logical: "a folk riddle in natural conditions, guessing is not intended to be solved through individual mental acuity; the solution is a communal property" (Nurullina et al., 2019).

Thus, in the English folktale "Riddles," a merchant undergoes an intricate series of transformations. They cause a number of deaths to occur in front of the main character: crows perish, thirty ravens swoop on carrion, an old woman gives a merchant dead water in a glass, a merchant pours water from a jug, and a horse drinks the water and dies. Afterwards, the elderly woman is told a riddle by the merchant. "Here's a riddle for you: from a glass to a jug, from a jug to a palm, from a palm to a whip, from a whip to a horse, from a horse to thirty ravens, from ravens to thirty fellows" (Afanasev, 1982) describes everything he saw in chronological order. Naturally, the elderly woman is unable to solve this puzzle and gives the merchant her money. Naturally, the guesser's motivation for solving this riddle is also an example of his cunning, since his entire strategy is predicated on presenting what he saw in an allegorical manner and presuming that the guesser is not familiar with the original situation. Propp (2022) further states that the riddle reveals the illogicality of the allegorical description of actions or events by allowing you to alter the information system that has developed in an English fairy tale: "if the following functions are performed by different characters, then the second character should know what happened before" (Safonova & Erofeeva, 2016).

The English fairy tale only shows the effects of its influence; it offers no evaluation or comparison of the topic. Second, after learning about the circumstances that led to the creation of this description, the text of the riddle also experiences a "double" perception. If we consider a riddle that is not related to any real-world scenario, we can include any verb that comes to mind when writing the riddle, which allows the range of possible answers to grow to amazing proportions. The degree of imaginative perception of the riddle sharply diminishes if we are already familiar with the situations the merchant found himself in. This is because we will immediately connect the description to the events we have previously read, taking it to be a factual statement. Thirdly, the guesser is provided with only the most recent information by the riddle, as we have already mentioned. It was crucial to this riddle to show the subject's level of influence over several events, which are shown as a sequence of alternating destinations. It should be noted that national concepts of good and evil (Thomas & Green, 1979) and how heavenly bodies are perceived are frequently reflected in folk riddles (Grice, 1975).

The next English fairy tale in this cycle demonstrates the opposite logic of the information's presentation. The peasant answers the tsar's question about his earnings with an allegorical statement, "I take twenty rubles to pay, twenty I pay a debt, twenty I lend, and twenty I throw out the window." The tsar asks the peasant to elaborate. Notably, the first action is given in its literal sense, meaning that the peasant actually pays to submit to the Treasury. However, when considering the actions that follow in their literal sense, they appear a little nonsensical. "I pay my debt-I support my father, I lend-I feed my son, I throw out the window-I feed my daughter," the peasant explains later. The aforementioned explanation of the riddle's linguistic features and the logic of the peasant's perception of the conduct of the material economy are presented rather succinctly (Gustav, 1958).

It should be noted that there is a regret component to the last description of "throwing out the window," which is supported by its "decoding"—I feed my daughter. "Ivan the Fool sees: bread on the road, a horse in bread; he drove her out with a whip so as not to trample, and says: There is a riddle!" is the opening scenario that we encounter again in the English fairy tale "The Princess who solves riddles." "I was driving to you, I saw good on the road, good is good, I took good and good out of good and drove it out; good ran away from good and out of good," is how I will later describe what I saw. As you can see, the description given is different from the ones that came before it because the hidden objects are named. Furthermore, multiple designations have been made, and each is represented by a single token. All that can be inferred from this description is that the hidden objects are either useful and not dangerous, or they have a "positive" connotation.

## **5. Discussion**

Based on the analysis, we can conclude that the riddle is constructed more veiled in the context of an English fairy tale because the guesser is not required to consider the generality of presuppositions. We frequently note a fairly broad usage of the denotation's secondary nomination along with the simultaneous use of verbs in the direct meaning. However, by examining these riddles rather than the included lexemes, we can claim that the inclusion of colored vocabulary is justified by the logic of constructing a description of the denotation, which conveys the speaker's attitude

toward the topic as well as an evaluation of its potential and functions in terms of a person's safety, significance, etc. The description of the denotation takes on an entirely new meaning when lexemes with abstract meanings are included, further broadening the range of possible denotations. "A new meaning is given to the word... the word acquires two significations, which makes it ambivalent," claims Kristeva (2015). Thus, this ambiguous word combines two different sign systems."

## 6. Conclusion

The conducted study demonstrated the value of examining the riddle in larger structural forms of folklore since it enables us to examine additional requirements for the operation of folklore microgenres as well as the internal mechanisms underlying the interaction of genres. Notably, one of the primary binary oppositions of Slavic culture is represented by the lexemes good and evil, which further complicates the search for a denotation and actualizes national cultural scenarios. It should be mentioned that the "disunity" of the original assumptions in each of these riddles caused the solver to either marry the tsar's daughter or become wealthy, and that this led logically to the English fairy tale's resolution.

## Acknowledgements

This paper is performed as part of the implementation of the Kazan Federal University Strategic Academic Leadership Program.

## References

- Afanas`ev, A. N. (1982). *Russian Folk English Fairy Tales*. M.: Pravda. 576 p.
- Byshev, A. V. (2018). Russian Folklore in the Multicultural World. *BU Bulletin*, 2.
- Davies, L. I. (2010). Orality, Literacy, Popular Culture: An Eighteenth-Century Case Study. *Oral Tradition*, 25(2), 305-23.
- Erofeeva, I. V., & Rakhimova, D. I. (2015). Extralinguistic phenomena categorization in medieval culture (illustrated by the words with the root 'MIR'). *Journal of Language and Literature*, 6(2), 330-333.
- Grice, H. P. (1975). Logik and conversation. *Syntax and Semantics*, 3(4), 41-58.
- Gustav, E. (1958). Mueller The Hegel Legend of 'Thesis-Antithesis-Synthesis'. *Journal of the History of ideas*, 19(3), 411-414.
- Kristeva, Y. (2015). *Semiotics: Research on Semanalysis*. – M.: Academic Project, 285 p.
- McCarthy, W. (2007). *Cinderella in America: A Book of Folk and Fairy Tales*. Jackson, Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi.
- Nurullina, G., Latfullina, L., & Usmanova, L. (2019). The lexeme "sun" as an element of the figurative system of works by MA Sholokhov. *Revista Inclusiones*, 766-771.
- Propp, V. Y. (2022). *Morfology of English Fairy Tale*. -M.: Eksmo, 224 p.
- Riordan, J. (2003). Russian fairy tales and their collectors. *A Companion to the Fairy Tale*, 217-25.
- Safonova, S. G., & Erofeeva, I. V. (2016). Representation of a concept «good» in a language picture of the Middle Ages world (on chronicles data). *Journal of Language and Literature*, 7(3), 268-271.
- Senderovich, S. (2005). *Riddle of the Riddle*. Routledge, 150 p.
- Thomas, A., & Green, W. J. (1979). Pepicello The folk riddle: a redefinition of terms. *Western Folklore*, 38(1), 3-20.
- Zipes, J. (2019). *The Evolution of Folk and Fairy Tales in Europe and North America*. Research gate.

