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THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ANIMAL IMAGES IN CHINESE, ENGLISH AND BELARUSIAN TALES

This work deals with a comparative study of the Chinese, English and Belarusian cultures through the discovery of universal and specific features of animal images in Chinese, English and Belarusian tales. The research is topical as it is necessary to study the system of animal images in Chinese, English and Belarusian folk tales as a reflection of the imaginative thinking of particular people. The scientific originality of the research is provided with author's approach to comparative analyses of animal images in Chinese, English and Belarusian fairy tales. The materials of the research can be used in teaching and studying language, literature and culture.

Introduction. Folklore is a collection of fictional stories about animals and people, of cultural myths, jokes, songs, tales, and even quotes. It is a description of culture, which has been passed down verbally from generation to generation. Folklore is also known as "folk literature," or "oral traditions".

According to the scientific definition in the literature, a tale — an epic literary genre, a narrative of some magical or adventurous events that has a clear structure: the beginning, the middle and the ending [1]. A feature of folk tales is that in a simple and easily readable text conceals the deepest social meaning. In addition, they preserve the richness of the national language. They can be both magical and domestic. Many folk tales tell about animals.

Animalistic tales tell the incredible daily adventures of animals. Animals found in folk tales are not represented as typical animals, but as special animals endowed with human features. They live, communicate and behave like real people. In different cultures, animals exhibit different qualities that are associated with the worldview of different people.

Main part. Based on the analysis of 40 Chinese, 40 English and 40 Belarusian folk tales, the most common animal symbols were selected. So in Chinese tales a tiger 老虎 is the most popular image (25%). A hare 兔子 and a monkey 猴子 (17%) are in the second place. A dog 狗 is in the third place. Also in Chinese tales popular characters are a cat 猫, a fox 狐狸, a mouse 老鼠, an elephant 象, a turtle 乌龟, a wolf 狼.

The Chinese image of the tiger is due to Chinese culture and traditions. In China the tiger is considered the king of animals, the lord of all animals living on land. The tiger represents the third of symbolic animals of the Twelve Earth Branches [7]. The tiger in Chinese culture is the embodiment of two balancing forces of nature. It is a very harmonious being able to show both softness and strength. He is both strong, with a hot temper (《松树, 老虎和乌龟》“About the Pine, the Turtle and a Tiger”; 《牛虎兄弟》“The Tiger and the Buffalo”; 《虎偷新娘》“How a tiger stole a bride”; 《老虎的老师》“The tiger’s teacher”) and sensitive, sympathetic, polite (《桔子老虎》“Tangerine tiger”). In some fairy tales, the tiger appears as slow and clumsy and sometimes even stupid and timid (《谁的本事大》“Who is the most capable”) [4].

In the second place among Chinese animal images are “a hare” 兔子 and “a monkey” 猴子. It is also explained by the peculiarities of Chinese culture. The first thing to note, both the hare and the monkey are symbolic animals of the Twelve Earth Branches [7]. In China, a hare represents the moon, rebirth, the return of youth. He often acts as a good friend, ready to help. For example, in the tale (《桔子老虎》“Tangerine Tiger”. Sometimes a hare is shown as boastful, curious, and sometimes a liar. An example is the following tales: 《兔尾》“The hare’s tale”; 《猴子称大王》“How the monkey called himself king”; 《狐狸被处罚》“How the fox was taught”.

As for the monkey, in China it symbolizes cheating and shamelessness. She grimaces, “intrigues” other animals. For example, in the fairy tale 《狐狸被处罚》“How the fox was taught.” Nevertheless, in other situations, it is the monkey that all animals turn to for advice. An example is the fairy tale 《小猪的礼物》“The Gift of the Pig” [4].

The third place in Chinese tales is taken by 那只狗 a dog (15 %). The Chinese dog means devotion, future prosperity. In the Chinese horoscope, the dog is the eleventh symbolic animal of the Twelve Earth Branches [7]. In Chinese dogs are always faithful friends, they show courage and wisdom.

One of the most common images in English fairy tales is a cat (27 %), and the functions that it performs in different fairy tales do not always coincide. In most cases, the cat behaves cunningly and self-confidently, clearly moves towards its goal and usually gets what it seeks (“The Mouse and the mouser” and “The little vain mouse”). Another feature of a cat, which is reflected in fairy tales, is its love of freedom and independence. He may be loyal to the owner, or may betray him for mistreatment (“The king of the cats”) [6].

In the second place in folk tales of the English and Belarusian peoples, an image of a fox (25 %) is found. An interesting fact is that in some English fairy tales, the fox appears in an absolutely uncharacteristic way, which refutes the traditional idea of the fox as an animal sly, crafty and sneaky. For example, “The foolish fat fox”, “The fox out witted” and “The cock and the fox”. The very names of fairy tales do not characterize the fox from the best side, emphasizing its stupidity and credulity. Based on the qualities attributed to the fox and the development of fabulous action, we can conclude that stupidity and selfishness are condemned in English culture. On the other hand, the fox's hypocrisy and flattery are not criticized. In the end of the tales she is usually a winner.

A mouse (17 %) takes the third place. The conflict between a cat and a mouse is characteristic of English folklore (“Mouse and Mouser” “The Cat and the Mouse” “The Vain Little Mouse”).

The fairy tale “Mouse and Mouser” seems more interesting, not only because it, like the fairy tale “The Vain Little Mouse”, ends tragically, but also because it reveals plot elements that determine the plot of the fairy tale about the vanity mouse. In the fairy tale “Mouse and Mouser” the mouse tells the cat that she found a six-pence coin when she was cleaning at home, only she bought not a bow or a hat, but a pudding that set to cool on the window. The mouse complains to the cat that another cat ate the pudding. However, the cat eats her: “And I’ll eat you, good body, good body”. Another important fairy tale is about Titty mouse and Tatty mouse. Like the other fairy tales de-

scribed, this one is built on a cumulative principle and ends tragically: "...and poor little Tatty Mouse was buried beneath the ruins".

In English fairy tales, there are also other animals: a bear, a pig, a bull, a horse, a lion and birds — an eagle, a pigeon, a kite, a raven, a parrot.

Large forest animals appear in Belarusian tales more often — a wolf, a fox, a bear. In Belarusian folk tales, the image of a wolf (30 %) is the most popular. The attitude to the wolf in the Belarusian language is different. On the one hand, it reflects anger, but on the other hand, courage and victory.

Among Slavic peoples the image of the wolf is connected with important events of people's life: death (the image accompanied people after death); a wedding (a groom was called a "wolf" who came to find a "sheep"); with some carol holidays (Kolyada). But besides fears among the Slavic people, a brave and intelligent wolf evokes sympathy. Since ancient times, people believed that if the wolf crosses the road, it will bring happiness. Surprisingly, but Belarusian tales emphasize his stupidity and at the same time show his greediness ("Леў і воўк", "Глупы воўк", "Чаму воўкі званочкаў баяцца") [2].

In the second place in Belarusian tales the image of a fox (22 %) is found. The fox appears in the folklore of many cultures, especially European and East Asian folklores, as a figure of cunning or trickery, or as a familiar animal possessed of magic powers. The image of the fox in both Belarusian and Chinese cultural traditions is endowed with cunning, intelligence, and beauty. The fox is cunning, smart, has an analytical mind, a cheat.

A bear (20 %) is in third place in Belarusian folk tales. The bear was considered the protector from evil — the ancient Slavs connected the beginning of spring with his awakening. The bear is the owner of the forest, the king. His fairy tales are usually portrayed as a just and wise ruler.

The tale "Мядзведзь ліпава яра" is one of the most ancient animal tales. It shows the belief that the bear is touchy and vindictive. In fairy tales, a bear is a beast of the highest rank. He is among the most powerful but not the smartest. In some tales he crushes everything that comes in his way. In the tale "Не сілай, а розумам" the bear is shown as stupid and completely unfamiliar with peasant life. The bear uses its power out of mind [3].

In Belarusian tales other animals were found: a wild boar, a woodpecker, a hedgehog, an elk, a crane, a heron.

Conclusion. An entrance to the study of Chinese, English and Belarusian animal fairy tales revealed that the set of images represented in them is very diverse, while the animals characteristic of one culture are sometimes completely unacceptable for another. Moreover, most of the images in Chinese, English and Belarusian cultures have a dual nature; they reveal both positive and negative qualities. Thus, images in different linguistic cultures contain different human qualities, which testify to the individuality of imaginative thinking of a particular people.

The research proves the following:

1. The choice of folk-tale animal images is determined by national cultural traditions.

2. In Chinese tales, the image of a tiger as the king of animals is the most popular. In English tales — the image of a cat which is associated with such qualities as determination and the desire to achieve a goal. In Belarusian tales the image of a wolf is popular as it is connected with mythology.

3. Characters that have absolute similarities in three cultures were revealed: a hare, a cat, a dog.

4. Some characters have a partial resemblance in Chinese, English and Belarusian tales — a fox and a lion.

5. Some animal images of one culture are sometimes completely unacceptable for another. Unique characters in Chinese tales are an elephant, a monkey, a panda, a turtle, a bat, a panther, a grasshopper, a deer, a stork; in English tales — an eagle, a pigeon, a kite, a raven, a parrot; in Belarusian tales — a wild boar, a woodpecker, a hedgehog, an elk, a crane, a heron.

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