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## **Formulas of Space and Time in French and Azerbaijani Fairi Tales**

### **ABSTRACT**

French and Azerbaijani fairy tales were created based on the traditions of past universal cultural heritage, and over time, national nuances were added to these traditions, resulting in the formation of national fairy tales. Therefore, the texts of French and Azerbaijani fairy tales can be considered an ancient part of the global national landscape, while the phraseological units used in the texts of French and Azerbaijani fairy tales can be regarded as an ancient and relatively unchanging part of the global linguistic landscape.

In the texts of French and Azerbaijani fairy tales, there are numerous formulas of time and space, which are reflected both in the plot of the tales and in the description of similar archetypes. As in the fairy tales of many peoples around the world, French and Azerbaijani fairy tales are divided into three main parts: the beginning, the main part, and the end of the tale. French and Azerbaijani fairy tales begin with an introduction, which consists of similar and different traditional fairy tale formulas. The main purpose of opening formulas is to arouse the audience's interest in the story. For this purpose, various means are used in opening formulas. As a rule, these sentences provide readers and listeners with information about the time and place where the story takes place and create curiosity and intrigue to capture their attention. In French and Azerbaijani fairy tales, introductory sentences indicate both the place and time in which the tale takes place. In French and Azerbaijani fairy tales, there are two types of introductions: simple and complex.

Both languages compared have complex structured opening formulas. The rich semantics of these sentences and the stylistic devices used are of great interest. Medial formulas are used in the midst of the tale. In Azerbaijani tales, these formulas are used to further increase the listener's interest, while in French tales, they are used to test the listener's concentration. Both French and Azerbaijani fairy tales, as a rule, end with closing formulas. The introductory and closing formulas are repeated from tale to tale and gradually become part of the phraseological stock of the languages we are studying as phraseological units.

The primary objective of the research is a comparative-typological study and analysis of time and space formulas in French and Azerbaijani fairy tales.

**Key words:** *French fairytales, Azerbaijani fairytales, space, time, comparative-typological analysis, formulas*

### **Introduction**

A fairy tale is one of the most ancient and widespread epic genres of oral folk literature, reflecting the historical traditions of the people, their outlook on life, their way of life and customs, their lifestyle, national traits, and noble human qualities such as patriotism and heroism through optimistic artistic fiction. Fairy tales remain an important tool in the study of religious, national-spiritual and

multicultural values, as well as historical past. The plot of fairy tales is traditional. This traditionality is most evident in the formulas. Fairy tale formulas are not just means of artistic description, but also components that make up the poetic system of the fairy tale. Since they are formed based on the poetic requirements of the genre, in each group of tales they acquire a unique character and reflect the creative power of the storytelling tradition.

### **Methodology**

The formula types of fairy tales have always been one of the controversial issues in both world and Azerbaijani folklore. There are also enough studies on the formula types of fairy tales in world folklore. These studies create a wide opportunity for the comparative study of French and Azerbaijani fairy tales. In order to compare the fairy tales of these peoples, it is first necessary to determine their structure. The researcher O. Aliev believes that a comprehensive study of fairy tales is only possible after their systematic study. By "study," the researcher means the separate and systematic examination of various parts of the plot (10,17). Indeed, it is precisely through these methods that one can determine the similar and different features of various folklore genres and distinguish them from each other based on genre characteristics.

The plot lines used in the fairy tales of both peoples differ from each other with their specific characteristics. For example, the strong fiction in fairy tales, the manifestation of allegory in animal tales, as well as events related to the depiction of real truth by the hero in household tales, have created the basis for a somewhat broader and more developed plotline in these tales. In this regard, the similarities and differences between the formulaic index of fairy tales in French folklore and the systematization in Azerbaijani folklore are of interest.

### **Literature Review**

N. Roshianu considers that works of the folklore genre, including fairy tales, have a stereotyped structure and that such works contain certain "common places" which have over time become stable word formulas. [11,53] The "common places" mentioned by N. Roshianu also include special expressions used at the beginning and end of the fairy tales of the French and Azerbaijani peoples.

Many linguists, notably K. Simonov, P. N. Boratav, V. Eberhard, and V. Isgandarova, refer to these expressions as "formulas." We believe that this term is fairly consistent and would be appropriate to use.

The researcher V. Iskenderova notes that traditional formulas have a stylistic nature. [5, 4] The author considers them an important component of fairy tale narratives and ancient traditions.

Such formulas were formerly seen by Yusuf Vezir Chemenshemini as the adornments of fairy tales, which serve as repositories of national memory. He stated that "... what adorns fairy tales is their linguistic composition and sentences." According to this viewpoint, when studying folk literature, this aspect should always be kept in mind. It is impossible to draw any conclusions otherwise. [1, 277-278].

## Discussion

When we talk about the formulas in the French and Azerbaijani tales, we see that the formulas in most of these tales are the identical and parallel. Therefore, the events in the tales are related to the main character. In general, most of these works present the good versus the evil. Let us also emphasize that the depiction of different animal species in these tales has not only an aesthetic character in the poetic system of fairy tales from a descriptive point of view, but also stems from ancient mythological thoughts and beliefs.

In terms of the classification of formula types, the studies by P. N. Boratav and W. Eberhard also attract attention. In their work "Types of Turkish Folk Tales," the authors addressed very important points regarding formulas in the introductory part of the tales. [9,88] They note that the introductory formula, which begins with the phrase "once upon a time...", can continue with the device of "nursery rhymes or repetition." P. N. Boratav and V. Eberhardt emphasize another characteristic feature of the opening formula of fairy tales. "Usually, before moving on to the events of the main plot, fairy tales may present small details describing the hero's situation, life, birth, and youth." [3,11-12]

K. I. Simonov calls the phrases at the beginning of a folklore text "initial formulas." According to the scholar, these formulas determine the action in time. [12,253]

Romanian scholar Nicolae Rosianu, in his work "Traditional Formulas of Fairy Tales" published in 1974, studied the style of fairy tale narration using folklore materials of European and Asian peoples and divided fairy tale formulas into 3 large groups:

1. Initial formulas;
2. Medial formulas.

The researcher divides the initial formulas into two parts:

1. Time;
2. Space. [11,295]

The time formulas seen in French and Azerbaijani fairy tales express that the events took place in the distant past. Time formulas are expressed either using the formulas "əyyami sabiqdə", "keçmiş zamanda" or using past tense suffixes. In fairy tales where time formulas are not used, the time of

events is expressed using the suffixes "idi" and "imish". In fairy tales, time is not specified precisely; events usually occur in an indefinite time. Therefore, opening formulas are utilized to emphasize that the events take place in the distant past. The narrator recognizes that the fairy tale's chronological period differs from the present. Therefore, he often uses phrases like "o vaxtı", "o vaxtlar", "keçmişdə"<sup>1</sup> to emphasize the differences in narrative time. The storyteller expresses the time when the events occur as "in the past times," "in old days," "in former times," "in ancient times," "in bygone days", thereby indicating that the events in the story take place in the distant past. When we pay attention to the formulas expressing time, we see that there is no significant difference in meaning between them; they are all composed of synonymous expressions. The first part of the formula consists of synonymous words such as "keçmiş", "qədim", "səbiq" while the second part consists of expressions that are close in meaning to each other, such as "zaman", "qərinə", "əyyam". In the example of time formulas, we see that formulas are not fixed expressions or set phrases, but can change in form while maintaining their function and main content. Moreover, there are also time formulas such as "günlərin bir günündə" as "one fine day," which differ from the previous formulas. Some formulas, such as "Əyyami-səbiqdə" are given with an ezafə<sup>2</sup>.

Time formulas are also used to create connections between episodes in the text, to introduce a new character into the storyline. In this type of fairy tale, certain formulas are used to create connections between different biographical times, to transfer events from one place to another. These formulas create links between different biological times and ensure the transition from one biological time to another. Either narrative formulas or time-expressing formulas like "one fine day" or "one day", "once" are used to generate this transition. *Once, at night Alimardan came to agreement with his wife so that he could earn a living in the city [6, 21]; One day, in the morning, news came that the padishah's son wanted to go to Mecca [7, 108]; One day, Nardankhatun went to gather some different edible greens to prepare food for her brothers [7, 196]; Having lived like this for some time, one day a barber came to Bakhityar to shave his head [7, 75].*

K.I. Simonov writes that "fairy tale narrators use 'impossible formulas' that reflect the unreality of events occurring in everyday life" [12, 47]. This idea of the scholar is confirmed by opening formulas used in French fairy tales: "*Au temps où les poules avaient des dents et où les chiens n'en avaient pas... - In the time when hens had teeth and dogs didn't have any...*" ...; *du temps où les bêtes parlaient... - Since the animals started talking: « Du temps que les bêtes parlaient, les Lions, entre*

<sup>1</sup> "at that time," "back then," and "in the past"

<sup>2</sup> a grammatical particle found in some Iranian languages, as well as Azerbaijani, Ottoman Turkish and Hindi-Urdu, that links two words together.

*autres, voulaient être admis dans notre alliance* » (Jean de La Fontaine)”. These expressions indicate an unknown time in which the action of the story takes place.

In Azerbaijani fairy tales, opening formulas indicating time are also used. For example: "Once upon a time, there lived a bald man" ("Kechal"); "Once upon a time, there was a poor man" ("The Bald Merchant"); "Once upon a time, there lived a man" ("The Witch-Dervish").

As can be seen from the examples, none of the languages indicate an exact time, but rather show that the events occurred in the distant past or in an unreal period. These sentences are expressed in the imperfect past tense, which in French is called "imparfait."

The fairy tales of both compared peoples have complex structural initial formulas. The rich semantics of these sentences and the stylistic devices used are of great interest. For example, in this regard, the tale "Donkeyskin" by Charles Perrault can be cited as an example. In the introduction to the fairy tale, the importance of its lengthy and narrative storytelling for understanding is emphasized, and it is written that "even the wisest mind often tires of tales about Giants and Fairies, so forgive me, without fearing what I will do, without abusing my free time to satisfy your fair desire, I will tell you the story of Donkeyskin" .

Such expressions have been influenced by the etiquette adopted at the court of the French king during the absolute monarchy of Louis XIV. Considering that Charles Perrault, the most famous author of French fairy tales, was the personal secretary of Louis XIV and an academician of the French Academy, which established the norms of the French language, it is natural for such expressions to be commonly used in fairy tales.

In their thoughts regarding the ending or closing formula, P. N. Boratav and W. Eberhard point out that the evil forces are typically defeated at the end. In fairy tales, rituals commemorating the triumph of good are tied with forty days. Often, the wedding lasts forty days and forty nights. The victory of the positive heroes in the fairy tale also brings joy to the listeners. According to the writers, in fairy tales, which typically end happily, just as the protagonists achieve their goals, the listeners are likewise wished to achieve theirs. Some fairy tales end with jokes and humor. At the end of the tale, three apples fall from the sky as a reward. While each listener waits to see who will receive the apples, the storyteller claims that all of them belong to him.

Similar ending formulas have also been found in fairy tales written in French and Azerbaijani: «*Depuis lors, il vécut heureux...*» - «*Ömürləri boyu kefi kök, damağı çağ yaşadılar*». - «*Since then they lived their entire lives in a state of bliss and abundance.*”.

*“Ils se marièrent et eurent beaucoup d’enfants”*. – *“Onlar evləndilər və onların çoxlu uşaqları oldu”* - *“They got married and had many children.”*.

*“Ils vécutent désormais heureux avec leurs enfants pour ne plus se séparer”. – “O vaxtdan onlar uşaqları ilə xoşbəxt yaşadılar və heç vaxt ayrılmadılar”.- “They lived happily ever after with their children and never parted again.”.*

The concept of epic space is one of the most relevant topics in folklore studies. Dozens of works have been devoted to the study of this topic, and such well-known researchers of the time as S.Y. Neklyudov, T.V. Sivyan, D.S. Likhachev, V.N. Toporov have conducted research in this direction. In most of these studies, epic space has been evaluated through the familiar and unfamiliar opposition. In Fuzuli Bayat's study dedicated to Azerbaijani fairy tales, space has been studied from this perspective. [8]

In the fairy tales of the French and Azerbaijani peoples, space is not just a passive backdrop or setting on which events occur; it also has a role and function in the structure of the tale. The presence of a spatial element in a fairy tale means that the function will be realized. There are also certain archetypes behind similar spatial elements that we find in French and Azerbaijani fairy tales: stepmother; king (prince, wealthy man) / poor man; magical evil forces (witch, sorceress, giant, dragon, old woman, etc.) / magical good forces (old woman, fairy, etc.).

In many fairy tales, the stepmother mistreats and tortures the child ("Cendrillon", "Gracieuse et Percinet," "Sister and Brother," "The Tale of the Beautiful and the Yellow Cow"), the hero has nothing, faces difficulties, defeats evil forces, and ultimately achieves everything: marries the beloved, becomes rich and happy ("Le Chat Botte", "The Tale of the Homeland"). The hero sets out on a journey with specific goals, and along the way, he encounters various adventures ("Le prince lutin", "Le petit jardinier aux cheveux d'or", "Le magicien Marcou-Braz", "Jean de l'ours", "The Tale of the Homeland").

The main reasons of the journey are:

- finding an unreal place: *au pays inconnu, au hasard, à un certain endroit, dans un grand bois, au pays des étoiles* ( in an unknown country, at random, in a certain place, in a large wood, in the land of stars)

- finding an unusual object in a familiar place: *“Au Sud du pays, sur le bord de la mer, se trouve un château et dans ce château fleurit une rose qui guérit”.*

(«La rose qui guérit»). (“In the south of the country, on the seashore, there is a castle and in this castle blooms a healing rose.” (“The Healing Rose”).

The hero does not leave his home of his own free will:

- they are misleading him from his home (“Le Petit Poucet“, “Vətənnən cəlayi-vətənin nağılı” and so on.);

- The stepmother (father) mistreats the hero and he is forced to run away from home. ("Peau d'âne", "Les deux grenouilles d'or", "Le toureau bleu", "Göyçək Fatma" and so on ).

The hero does not leave his home, the main events take place in the place where he lives (in the house, castle, city) («Le pauvre et le riche», «Cendrillon», «La belle au bois dormant», «Riquet à la houppe», «Les petites graines de bonheur», «Ağılı qoca», «Çırxılı İsa» və s.).

## Conclusion

In Azerbaijani fairy tales, spatial landmarks are structured according to opposites: sunrise-sunset, west-east, maghrib-mashriq, right-left, up-down, north-south, dog barking-light coming, and so on. When the hero comes to a crossroads, he normally follows the right path, and when seeking for Gulistan-i Iram<sup>3</sup>, he usually heads towards the sunrise. These spatial features do more than just identify direction; they also serve certain roles. In fairy tales where space is created on the basis of opposite poles, the dawn, right, up, and qibla always represent good, and the person who goes in that direction finds good, whereas the one who goes in the opposite direction faces bad luck. For example, the father forbids his sons from going hunting in Garadag. Given the mountain's role in the tale, it is inevitable that a certain tragedy will occur if the ban is broken. Indeed, that is what happens. The older brothers who went hunting in Garadag are chasing a gazelle and there has been no word from them since. [13,53] As can be seen, the mountain is not only a place where events take place or setting of the story, but it is also a narrative device that affects the structure of the fairy tale. In other words, the setting is not only the backdrop where events occur in fairy tales, but also a part of the fairy tale's structure.

Overall, the fairy-tale space in both people's stories is indefinite. As a result, activities here are frequently not related to a specific location, but rather take place in ambiguous locations such as "in the city," "in the village," or "in the country." In fact, while the same spatial features appear in different fairy stories, their function is nearly identical in both French and Azerbaijani tales. The semantic description of spatial aspects in both people's fairy tales demonstrates that this genre is stable both morphologically and lexically. Fairy tales, regardless of who tells them, are organized around certain lexical units. The researcher T.V. Sivyan notes in this regard that fairy tales are not only identical but are also told in the same words. [14, 212].

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<sup>3</sup> garden of Eden, paradise



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