

NATIONAL-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF FIGURATIVE DEVICES USED IN ENGLISH CHILDREN'S FOLKLORE TEXTS

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Abstract. This article examines the national-cultural characteristics of figurative devices used in English children's folklore from linguocultural and cognitive perspectives. The research focuses on nursery rhymes, riddles, folk tales, counting-out rhymes, lullabies, and traditional children's songs. Particular attention is paid to metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, simile, personification, and symbolic imagery as mechanisms of cultural transmission and conceptualization. The findings demonstrate that figurative language in English children's folklore performs not only aesthetic and educational functions but also serves as a medium for preserving and transmitting national values, historical memory, social norms, and cultural models. The study reveals that recurring folklore images such as the moon, animals, kings, queens, birds, gardens, and seasons function as culturally embedded symbols that shape children's perception of the world and contribute to the development of national identity.

Keywords: children's folklore, figurative language, metaphor, personification, linguocultural studies, English folklore, cultural symbolism, cognitive linguistics.

INTRODUCTION. Folklore represents one of the most significant repositories of a nation's cultural memory. It preserves collective experiences, beliefs, traditions, and values accumulated over centuries. Children's folklore occupies a special place within this heritage because it functions as a means of cultural transmission from one generation to another. Through songs, rhymes, riddles, tales, and games, children acquire linguistic competence and internalize cultural norms.

One of the most remarkable features of children's folklore is its rich use of figurative language. Figurative devices such as metaphor, simile, personification, metonymy, and symbolism transform ordinary experiences into memorable images that facilitate learning and imagination. From a cognitive perspective, figurative language helps children conceptualize abstract phenomena through familiar experiences. From a cultural perspective, these devices encode national values and worldviews.

The significance of figurative language has been extensively discussed by scholars such as George Lakoff, Mark Johnson, Raymond Gibbs, and Zoltán Kövecses. Their studies emphasize that metaphor is not merely a stylistic ornament but a fundamental mechanism of human cognition. However, relatively little attention has been devoted to the national-cultural dimensions of figurative language in English children's folklore.

This study aims to identify the main types of figurative devices used in English children's folklore and to reveal their cultural meanings and functions within British cultural traditions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS. descriptive analysis; linguocultural analysis; cognitive-semantic analysis; contextual interpretation; comparative analysis; quantitative analysis.

The corpus analyzed in this study consists of 150 examples collected from English children's folklore, including:

Genre	Number of texts
Nursery rhymes	50
Traditional riddles	30
Folk tales	25

Counting-out rhymes	15
Children's songs	20
Lullabies	10
Total	150

RESULTS

Distribution of Figurative Devices

Analysis of the corpus revealed 312 instances of figurative language.

Figurative Device	Frequency	Percentage
Metaphor	118	37.8%
Personification	79	25.3%
Simile	51	16.3%
Metonymy	29	9.3%
Symbolism	24	7.7%
Synecdoche	11	3.6%

The results indicate that metaphor and personification are the dominant figurative mechanisms in English children's folklore.

Metaphors and Their Cultural Significance

The Moon as a Human Figure

A common nursery rhyme states:

"The Man in the Moon came down too soon."

The moon is represented as a human being capable of movement and action.

From a cultural perspective, this metaphor reflects:

- anthropocentric thinking;
- medieval folklore traditions;
- personified cosmic imagery.

Unlike many Eastern traditions where the moon is associated with feminine beauty or wisdom, English folklore often portrays the moon as a male figure.

This difference reflects distinctive cultural conceptualizations.

Time as a Traveller

In many English nursery rhymes, time is conceptualized metaphorically.

Example:

"Monday's child is fair of face."

Days are personified and associated with specific characteristics.

This metaphor reflects:

- cyclical understanding of time;
- Christian calendar traditions;
- cultural beliefs about destiny.

Animal Metaphors in English Folklore

Animals frequently symbolize human traits.

Linguocultural Function

Figurative devices preserve cultural knowledge.

Images such as:

- roses;
- crowns;
- castles;
- robins;

- oak trees

represent core concepts within English culture.

Through repeated exposure, children internalize these cultural models and develop a sense of belonging to their national community.

CONCLUSION.

The analysis leads to the following conclusions:

1. Metaphor is the most frequently used figurative device in English children's folklore.
2. Personification and simile play a significant role in creating vivid and memorable imagery.
3. Figurative language serves as an important mechanism for cultural transmission.
4. Images such as the moon, rose, crown, oak tree, robin, and lamb function as national-cultural symbols.
5. Figurative devices contribute to children's cognitive, emotional, and cultural development.
6. English children's folklore reflects the historical, social, and environmental realities of British culture through its figurative language.
7. The study of figurative language in children's folklore provides valuable insights into the relationship between language, cognition, and culture.

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