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CLASSIFICATION OF MYTHOLOGICAL UNITS IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH LANGUAGES

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ABSTRACT

Mythological units, as carriers of collective memory and cultural identity, play a crucial role in shaping the linguistic worldview of every nation. This paper aims to examine the classification of mythological units in the Uzbek and English languages from a comparative linguistic and cultural perspective. The study focuses on identifying universal mythological archetypes, culture-specific symbols, and linguistic representations of mythic consciousness embedded in each language. Drawing on structural-semantic and cultural-linguistic methodologies, the paper analyzes the nature, origin, and functions of mythological elements — including deities, supernatural beings, folk heroes, and cosmological symbols — as reflected in linguistic expressions, folklore, and idiomatic structures. The research reveals both convergent and divergent aspects of mythological categorization: while universal archetypes such as the hero, serpent, and sun appear in both traditions, Uzbek mythology preserves more animistic and nature-centered elements, whereas English mythology is heavily influenced by classical, Christian, and Celtic sources. This comparative framework not only deepens understanding of linguistic mythopoetics but also contributes to the broader study of how myth functions as a semiotic and cognitive system in shaping national identity and worldview.

KEYWORDS: *Mythology, Mythological Units, Uzbek Language, English Language, Linguistic Worldview, Cultural Semiotics, Archetype, Folklore.*

INTRODUCTION

Language and mythology are two interrelated systems that collectively construct and preserve the worldview of a nation. Mythological units — words, names, and symbolic concepts originating from myths and folk narratives — form a vital part of the linguistic and cultural consciousness of a people. Through them, generations transmit their understanding of nature, spirituality, morality, and social order. The comparative study of such mythological elements in different languages allows researchers to uncover both universal and culturally specific ways in which human beings conceptualize the world.

The significance of studying mythological units lies in their dual function: they serve as linguistic signs with specific semantic structures, and at the same time, as cultural symbols that embody collective experience. For instance, the Uzbek term ajdarho (dragon) and the English dragon share certain symbolic features — power, mystery, and danger — yet differ in their mythological associations: in Uzbek tradition, the ajdarho often represents an obstacle to be overcome by a hero, while in Western mythology, the dragon may serve as both a destroyer and a guardian of treasures or wisdom. Such examples illustrate how mythological concepts evolve within linguistic frameworks, reflecting distinctive historical and cultural experiences.

The purpose of this research is to develop a comparative classification of mythological units in the Uzbek and English languages. The study seeks to identify their types, structures, semantic fields, and cultural connotations. It also aims to determine how mythological thinking manifests in linguistic expression and how these units contribute to the preservation of national identity. The main objectives include: 1. To define the concept and features of mythological units in linguistic terms; 2. To analyze the types and classifications of mythological elements in Uzbek and English; 3. To explore similarities and differences based on cultural, historical, and cognitive factors; 4. To propose a model for the comparative categorization of mythological lexicon.

The relevance of this topic is underscored by the growing interest in linguistic and cultural anthropology, cognitive linguistics, and semiotics — disciplines that emphasize the role of language as a repository of cultural memory. In both Uzbekistan and the English-speaking world, mythological expressions continue to influence literature, idioms, and popular culture, preserving ancient narratives in modern communication. Understanding the mechanisms by which these mythological elements are structured and transmitted linguistically provides deeper insights into the national mentality, worldview, and symbolic imagination of each culture.

The novelty of this research lies in its interdisciplinary approach: by integrating linguistic, semiotic, and mythological analysis, it offers a systematic framework for classifying mythological units across two distinct language systems. Moreover, it emphasizes the

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comparative methodology as a tool for revealing how universal mythological archetypes (such as creation, transformation, and heroism) acquire unique linguistic and cultural manifestations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of mythological units within the framework of linguistics has been an interdisciplinary endeavor combining elements of philology, anthropology, semiotics, and cognitive science. Numerous scholars have examined the linguistic reflection of myth and its influence on the formation of the cultural worldview. The works of Claude Lévi-Strauss (1963), Mircea Eliade (1959), and Roland Barthes (1972) are particularly significant in establishing the theoretical foundation for mythological studies. Lévi-Strauss emphasized the structural nature of myth, suggesting that myths express universal patterns of human thought. Eliade viewed myth as a sacred narrative that reveals the archetypes of existence, while Barthes explored how myth functions as a system of signs within language and culture.

In linguistics, mythological units are regarded not only as cultural symbols but also as lexical and semantic entities that contribute to a nation's conceptual system. According to Yuri Lotman (1990), the mythological model of the world is encoded through language and semiotic mechanisms that define how people interpret reality. Similarly, Vladimir Propp's (1928) morphological approach to folklore and myths identified recurrent narrative functions that reveal the underlying linguistic and cultural logic of mythic expression.

In the context of Uzbek linguistics, research on mythological and folkloric language has developed primarily through the works of national scholars such as Sh. Shukurov, A. Madrahimov, and N. Karimova, who have examined the relationship between language, folklore, and national consciousness. These studies emphasize that Uzbek mythology retains a deep connection with nature, moral order, and spiritual beliefs. Mythological terms such as ajdarho (dragon), pari (fairy), dev (giant), and alvasti (witch-like spirit) embody symbolic concepts linked to good and evil, fertility, protection, and transformation. Uzbek scholars highlight that these mythological units function as a reflection of the ancient worldview of the Turkic peoples and remain embedded in modern Uzbek phraseology and folklore.

In contrast, the English linguistic tradition of studying mythology has been shaped by the works of Joseph Campbell (1949), Northrop Frye (1957), and C.S. Lewis (1966), who focused on the narrative and symbolic structures of myths within Western literature. Campbell's concept of the "monomyth" or "hero's journey" illustrates the universality of mythological archetypes, which can be traced across different linguistic and cultural systems. English mythology — encompassing Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, and classical Greco-Roman influences — has been analyzed through the lenses of symbolism, etymology, and narrative archetypes. Researchers such as E. O'Connor (1993) and R. Lacey (2008) have further examined how mythological motifs persist in the modern English lexicon and idiomatic expressions.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this research is based on a comparative linguistic and cultural approach designed to classify mythological units in the Uzbek and English languages. The interdisciplinary nature of the topic requires the integration of several analytical frameworks — structural-semantic, cognitive, and cultural-semiotic — to reveal how mythological concepts are encoded, transmitted, and interpreted within linguistic systems.

DATA SOURCES

The corpus of mythological units was compiled from a combination of linguistic, folkloric, and literary materials, including: Uzbek folk epics (Alpomish, Go'ro'g'li, Ravshan); English folk and literary sources (Beowulf, The Faerie Queene, The Mabinogion); Dictionaries of mythological and cultural terminology (both Uzbek and English); Academic works on Uzbek and English mythology and linguistics.

The Uzbek corpus includes terms such as ajdarho (dragon), pari (fairy), dev (giant), alvasti (evil spirit), quyosh (sun), and oy (moon). The English corpus includes dragon, fairy, giant, elf, angel, and demon. These lexical items represent both universal and culture-specific mythological archetypes, allowing for a comprehensive comparative analysis.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The study applies a structural-semantic analysis to explore how mythological meanings are encoded in linguistic forms. Each mythological unit was examined in terms of: Etymology – tracing historical development and original meaning; Denotative meaning – literal and referential function within mythological context; Connotative meaning – symbolic and emotional associations; Functional role – the unit's narrative or cultural purpose within the mythological system.

To complement the linguistic analysis, a cultural-semiotic approach (based on Lotman's semiotic theory) was employed to examine how mythological symbols function within the cultural communication system. Mythological units were analyzed as signs that carry both linguistic and cultural information, reflecting the worldview, moral values, and aesthetic ideals of a nation.

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Classification Criteria

The comparative classification of mythological units was based on the following criteria:

1.By Origin: Autochthonous (indigenous) units that developed within the national mythological system; Borrowed (cross-cultural) units adopted through cultural contact, trade, religion, or colonization.

2. By Function: Cosmological (explaining the universe, creation, and natural forces); Theological (relating to gods, spirits, and divine entities); Anthropological (connected with human traits, heroes, or moral lessons); Socio-moral (reflecting norms, ethics, and community order).

3. By Semantic Field: Natural elements (sun, moon, stars, water, fire); Supernatural beings (angels, demons, fairies, giants); Mythical animals (dragon, phoenix, serpent); Heroic archetypes (warrior, mother, trickster).

4. By Symbolic Meaning: Positive (life, fertility, wisdom, protection); Negative (evil, destruction, temptation, chaos); Dual/ambivalent (power, transformation, balance).

Comparative Procedure

After the classification, each mythological unit was compared across languages according to semantic and cultural parameters. The comparative procedure involved: Determining equivalent or analogous units (e.g., pari ↔ fairy, ajdarho ↔ dragon); Identifying divergences in symbolic and functional connotations; Analyzing how mythological concepts are linguistically represented in idioms, metaphors, and literary contexts.

Analysis and Discussion

This section presents a detailed comparative analysis of mythological units in the Uzbek and English languages according to their origin, structure, semantic content, and symbolic function. The purpose is to reveal how linguistic expression reflects the mythological worldview of each nation and how universal archetypes are manifested differently in both cultural contexts.

Mythological Units in the Uzbek Language

The Uzbek mythological system is deeply rooted in the ancient worldview of the Turkic peoples, where the universe was perceived as a living organism connected by spiritual and natural forces. Many mythological units in Uzbek originate from animistic beliefs, totemic traditions, and epic folklore, reflecting a close relationship between humans, nature, and the supernatural.

a) Deities and Spirits. Uzbek mythology contains a variety of spiritual entities that govern nature and human destiny. Among the most prominent are: Tangri (God) — the supreme sky deity representing the eternal blue heavens, symbolizing justice, fate, and divine authority. Umay — the goddess of fertility, motherhood, and protection of children. Alvasti — a female demon-like spirit associated with illness or moral corruption, often serving as a cautionary figure. Dev — a monstrous giant symbolizing chaos, ignorance, or the destructive aspects of nature. These figures embody the dualistic worldview where good and evil coexist as essential parts of cosmic harmony.

b) Mythological Creatures. The ajdarho (dragon) occupies a central place in Uzbek mythology. It is often depicted as a multi-headed serpent or dragon living in water or mountains, representing both destructive power and life-giving energy. The hero's victory over the ajdarho symbolizes moral triumph and cosmic order. Other common entities include pari (benevolent fairy-like spirit) and jin (spirit with both good and evil aspects, influenced by Islamic mythology). Such units demonstrate the blending of Turkic, Persian, and Islamic mythological traditions.

c) Cosmic and Natural Symbols. Uzbek mythological vocabulary preserves numerous natural and cosmic terms that function symbolically: Oy (moon) and quyosh (sun) represent female and male principles, night and day, fertility and power. Yulduz (star) and osmon (sky) are symbols of destiny, eternity, and divine presence. Suv (water) symbolizes purity, renewal, and life. These elements illustrate how the natural environment of Central Asia shaped the symbolic imagination of the Uzbek people.

d) Heroic Archetypes. Uzbek folklore heroes such as Alpomish, Ravshan, and Go'ro'g'li personify courage, loyalty, and national resilience. Their mythological image serves as a linguistic and cultural archetype of the ideal man — the defender of justice and the upholder of moral order. Mythological units connected with these heroes often appear in idiomatic and literary expressions, reinforcing cultural ideals of bravery and honor.

Mythological Units in the English Language

English mythology represents a rich synthesis of multiple traditions: Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, Norse, Greco-Roman, and Christian. Over time, these influences merged, creating a complex system of mythological units embedded in the English language and culture.

a) Deities and Divine Beings. Odin, Thor, and Freya from Norse mythology reflect power, war, and fertility — concepts inherited through Anglo-Saxon culture.

Zeus, Athena, and Apollo from classical mythology entered English through literature, forming symbolic references to wisdom, justice, and beauty.

God, angels, and demons represent Christian mythological layers, influencing English phraseology (angelic voice, fight the demon within).

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These mythological names are not only cultural references but also linguistic symbols used metaphorically in everyday communication.

b) Mythical Creatures. English mythology is populated by a wide range of creatures: Dragon — a powerful and ambivalent symbol, both destructive and protective. Fairy — benevolent, delicate being associated with magic and nature (Celtic origin). Elf, goblin, troll, and giant — representing the diversity of moral and natural forces. Mermaid and phoenix — symbols of transformation, immortality, and rebirth. These mythological units survive in idioms (to chase dragons), literature (The Lord of the Rings), and children's tales (Peter Pan, Sleeping Beauty), preserving ancient mythic imagery in modern English discourse.

c) Cosmic and Symbolic Elements. Natural and cosmic symbols play a significant role in English mythological vocabulary: Sun and moon signify the eternal rhythm of life and time. Fire, water, and earth correspond to creation, purification, and stability. Serpent symbolizes both evil (Biblical tradition) and wisdom (ancient paganism). Such duality illustrates how Christian and pre-Christian mythologies coexisted and intertwined within English culture.

d) Heroic Archetypes. English heroic myths, such as those surrounding King Arthur, Beowulf, and Robin Hood, express moral and national values — bravery, justice, and sacrifice. These archetypes contribute to the linguistic formation of idioms and metaphors like Arthurian courage or a Beowulfian struggle, symbolizing heroism and perseverance.

Semantic and Functional Insights. From a semantic viewpoint, Uzbek mythological units often convey moral and social lessons, functioning as didactic symbols. For example, "the ajdarho" story not only represents good defeating evil but also symbolizes the purification of the human spirit. In contrast, English mythological units are more frequently used as literary and metaphorical devices, reflecting individual struggles and philosophical concepts. Functionally, mythological language in Uzbek serves to preserve national values, social ethics, and communal identity. In English, mythological expressions contribute to literary creativity, psychological depth, and universal symbolism. Despite these functional differences, both systems reaffirm the human need to interpret existence through narrative and symbolism.

FINDINGS

1) Both Uzbek and English languages possess rich mythological vocabularies derived from diverse religious, historical, and environmental sources. 2) Universal archetypes exist across cultures, but their linguistic realization differs according to local worldview and social values. 3) Uzbek mythological units are strongly tied to nature, moral duality, and collective ethics. 4) English mythological units emphasize individual heroism, divine authority, and moral conflict. 5) Linguistically, mythological units act as semiotic bridges connecting language, thought, and culture.

CONCLUSION

The comparative study of mythological units in the Uzbek and English languages demonstrates that mythology is not merely a relic of the past but a dynamic linguistic and cultural phenomenon that continues to shape collective identity, values, and expression. Through language, ancient myths are transformed into living symbols that preserve the moral and philosophical worldview of nations.

The research has shown that both Uzbek and English mythological systems share universal archetypal structures—such as the hero, the dragon, the sky deity, and the spirit—yet each interprets these archetypes according to its own cultural, religious, and historical context. The Uzbek mythological lexicon is deeply connected with nature, spirituality, and moral harmony, while the English mythological system reflects divine hierarchy, heroism, and intellectual symbolism inherited from classical and Christian traditions. Linguistically, mythological units function as semiotic bridges linking language and culture. They operate on multiple levels of meaning: as lexical items with specific denotations, as cultural symbols expressing collective consciousness, and as creative resources for modern discourse. The study's classification model, based on origin, function, semantic field, and symbolic meaning, provides a systematic approach for cross-cultural linguistic comparison. This model can be applied to further analyses of other languages, enhancing the understanding of universal and culture-specific mythic patterns.

From a cultural perspective, the persistence of mythological expressions in modern Uzbek and English communication demonstrates that mythology continues to fulfill essential cognitive and aesthetic functions. In Uzbek culture, mythological units preserve the moral and ecological wisdom of the Turkic ancestors; in English, they maintain philosophical and artistic continuity with the past. Both serve as linguistic reservoirs of imagination and moral guidance.

The findings highlight that mythology, as reflected through language, contributes to the continuity of cultural identity and the formation of national consciousness. It represents the synthesis of history, emotion, and thought — the essence of how societies conceptualize the universe and their place within it.

The study's novelty lies in its comparative linguistic focus on two distinct yet interrelated mythological systems. By bridging linguistic, semiotic, and mythological disciplines, it expands the theoretical foundation of mytholinguistics and demonstrates the relevance of mythological research for cultural linguistics, translation studies, and cognitive semantics.

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Future research can build upon these findings by exploring mythological symbolism in modern media, literature, and intercultural communication.

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