

# COMPOSITIONAL FEATURES OF KARAKALPAK FOLK FAIRY TALES

Kabilova Gulayim Bazarbaevna

Basic doctoral student of the Research Institute of Humanities of the  
Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Email: GulayimKabulova@gmail.com

Tel: +998991931511

## Abstract

The article explores the compositional structure and narrative characteristics of Karakalpak folk fairy tales. It highlights the unique features of oral folklore, including the simplicity and accessibility of plot lines, the use of traditional introductions, and the flexible narrative structure that often begins with central conflicts rather than chronological exposition. It also examines the influence of humor, imaginative elements, and formulaic expressions in shaping the tales' aesthetic appeal. Furthermore, the role of traditional storytellers and the evolution of fairy tale narration in Karakalpak society is discussed, illustrating the oral tradition's adaptability and enduring cultural significance.

**Keywords:** Karakalpak folklore, composition, narrative structure, oral tradition, exposition, humor in folktales, storytelling.

## Introduction

Karakalpak oral folk art possesses unique genre, plot, and compositional characteristics. These characteristics of folklore genres are considerably lighter compared to written literary works. "The composition of folklore works is very simple and easy to understand. Events are arranged chronologically". [1:27] Compared to written literary works, the plot and compositional structure of folklore genres are simple, easy to understand, and concise, but in some cases, they are also presented as complex. The compositional structure of Karakalpak folk tales is not standardized; in some folk tales, the story begins and continues sequentially, while in others, the story doesn't start from the beginning, but rather begins with the main conflict events to capture the reader's attention.

As folklorist scholar K. Maksetov notes, the construction of plots related to people's lives, the behavior of different people, the depiction of life's difficulties, overcoming any difficulties, is widespread in fairy tales, and this has formed a certain folkloric tradition. [2:183] In terms of genre, fairy tales have an artistic-compositional structure. They are created and performed within the framework of the same artistic forms. The introduction, the beginning of the story, the conflict, the epic events, and the conclusion form the basis of the compositional structure of the fairy tale. Fairy tale scholar A.V. Gusev, in his research, also pays attention to the composition of the fairy tale and describes it as follows: "The main features of the fairy tale genre are significant collisions and conflicts reflected in the social, family-everyday circles. Fairy tales are based on art". [3:125] Agreeing with the scholar's views, we believe that the traditional introduction of folk tales is a characteristic of the folk tales of all peoples of the

world, and the task of the traditional introduction is to focus attention and prepare for listening to the tale. The plot of the traditional introduction aims to create an imaginary background that matches human nature, creating a cheerful, humorous mood in the hearts of the audience, that is, the listeners. For example, in the tale "Tongue-Twister Tale" (Jańıltpash ertek), we see humorous introductory plots that evoke laughter in the listener: "My tale will come early, its ear will be dark, a ram will become a village, a crane will become a guard, a magpie will become a pretend judge, a quail will become lame, if you master the skin – you'll be the sole, and whoever God wills – will be the sultan". [4:550], while the beginning of the tale "Eshamaq and Doshamaq" goes like this: "Long, long ago, when the goat's tail was short, there lived two brothers named Eshamaq and Doshamaq". The language structure of the fairy tale is designed based on the speech of small children. [4:442] Such a humorous beginning of the tale further increases the listener's interest and captures their attention. Typically, the introductory sections of fairy tales, in a cohesive form, also reflect information about time and space. For example: "In old times, a man named Esim, who was a barber, lived in the city of Góne Úrgenish and made a living by working as a barber". [4:446] And in the fairy tale "Example of the right word," one can also see such an example. "In ancient times, a king went by Aspaxan and India". [4:512] Sometimes, a humorous situation arises at the beginning of a fairy tale's introduction, and this humor often continues throughout the story. For example, the tale "The Flea's Feast" (Búrge deńgene) is characterized entirely by its humorous nature: I caught the flea from the side, Tied it once again to the mulberry tree. I went to visit my friend, The flea was whispering — and so was I. I stood up and ran. I crossed a six-month-long road. Then I looked back — A spotted flea was chasing me! It caught up — it really did! Grabbed me — truly grabbed! The flea knocked me down once, But I knocked the flea down twice!. In some fairy tales, the introduction is connected to the continuation of the story, while in other cases, it remains independent. Although the beginning is considered a consistent element in the plot structure of a fairy tale, it is not related to the development of the plot and does not serve as a trigger for the action. The plot line informs us about the time and place where the events and incidents occur. The beginning of the tale typically reflects uncertainty and generalization in the narrative direction — as in the phrase: "Once there was, once there wasn't, in ancient times there lived a king". In some fairy tales, the location of the events is undefined and not mentioned by name, and such tales are dominated by ambiguity. It is mentioned simply as "a kingdom, a land". In the beginnings of some fairy tales, the main characters are introduced only superficially. Only their nickname, profession, or living condition is provided. For example, in the fairy tale "Counterfeit Fortune Teller" (Qálpeki palker) the fortune teller's name is not mentioned. From beginning to end, the fairy tale is referred to as a fortune teller. Other characters in the fairy tale are also given the names of king, poor vizier, and merchant. Such tales as "The Woodcutter", "The Consequences", "The Forgetful", "The Faint-hearted", "The Nine Whumblers, the One Shriek", and "The Anxiety of the Pot smoker" are also found. The beginnings of fairy tales can be either long or short in form, providing vague and unclear information about the future place and time of events and incidents. In some cases, the start of the story merges immediately with the beginning of the action. For example, "Long ago, the

vizier of a king and a shepherd walked down a road and saw a golden ring lying on the road. It was then that the vizier contemplated the atrocity. [4:148]

Such initiatives created conditions for the acceleration and intensification of the development of events in the past, the intensification of confrontation. That is, the beginning of a fairy tale is not the exposition itself, but rather leads to the exposition. The tale's opening is not directly connected to the plot; the plot actually begins with the exposition. The exposition, in turn, is directly related to the core of the tale; it is from the exposition that the events, actions, conflict, and development of the storyline begin. For example, in the tale "Malikhasen" (Málíkhásen) it is said: "In this imperfect world, there exists a God, speaking of stories from many lands, the son of Shah Mahmud Shari, whose name is Boray. King Boray had a dream, in which he saw a caged bird. There were three sons in this king." [4:36] As it is known, the mention of a king named Boray in the tale sets the plot in motion, while one day the king's dream, in which he sees a beautiful bird and fell in love with it, formed a plot. In such a case, this indicates the conflict related to epic events that drives the development of the plot. The exposition mainly identifies the main characters of the fairy tale, providing information about their behavior, appearance, and character traits along the way, and clarifying their relationships. For example, let's look at the exposition in the fairy tale "Flower-Nightingale" (Gúlbúlbúl): "In ancient times, in the city of Gulali, there lived a king named Zarimkhan, whose wealth was overflowing, whose reputation soared, who reckoned with his enemies to the last drop of blood, who treated his people fairly, who inquired with wisdom, who built cast-iron fortresses and surrounded the outskirts of the city. He was a very brave ruler. Zarim Batyr was called a brave warrior riding a strong horse". [4:242] In this way, the exposition, as a defining element of the fairy tale's composition, imparts clarity and comprehensibility to the plot events and concludes as a key characteristic.

Just as fairy tale plots are diverse, their plot development also varies depending on the character. In some fairy tales, the plot is real. It explains how the main character falls in love with a girl by seeing her in a dream or by seeing her portrait. For example, in the fairy tale "The Eagle" (Qıran), when the king goes on a journey, he gives his son the keys to all the doors in the palace and asks him not to open just one of them. The son agrees. However, despite his father's strict warning, his curiosity gets the better of him, and he opens the forbidden door. Inside, he sees the image of a beautiful girl and instantly falls in love with her. In this case, falling in love with the girl he saw in the picture was a life event, which became the basis for the plot. Now he unfolds the epic events of finding that girl and, based on this, paves the way for the resolution of the plot.

In imaginary fairy tales, the plot takes the form of imaginary narratives. This type of plot creates an imaginary background in a fairy tale. The plot in magical fairy tales takes two forms depending on its content: the first arises in connection with family problems. In this case, the motif of stepmotherhood is at the center. The plot of fairy tales like "The Blue Cow," "The Blue Ram," "The Girl with the Moon on Her Forehead," and "The Orphan's Happiness" has a similar character. For example, in the fairy tale "The Blue Cow" (Kók sıyr), an old man's wife dies prematurely, leaving him with his only daughter, the blue cow. But the old man married another

woman. That woman cruelly oppressed an orphaned girl. She worked tirelessly day and night, making her sleep late, waking her up early, and doing double the work. The second type occurs in connection with mysterious or frightening forces of nature, but in Karakalpak folk tales, there are no tales with negative plots presented by nature to humans. The plot of a fairy tale usually consists of two main parts: the first - the narrative part, the second - the events part. In the first, the main contradictions that ensure the development of plot events are stated, while in the second, these contradictions are directly revealed. There's also a conclusion at the end of fairy tales. They depict the final part of the fairy tale and, in an optimistic spirit, reflect the invincible spirit and strength of the people as a conclusion. In fairy tales, the culmination point is that the main character struggles with the opposing force and constantly overcomes it. Typically, at the end of a fairy tale, the hero achieves his goal and becomes the king of his people. In fairy tales, there are formulas for drawing the appearance of characters, namely portraits. For example, descriptions like "her mouth is like the moon, her eyes like the sun, her beauty astonishing, and a single mole on her forehead" or "when she drinks water, it can be seen flowing down her throat" clearly portray the fairy-tale heroine's beauty, depicting her as a symbol of idealized, poetic beauty. Fairy tales passed down orally from ancient times continue to absorb the changes and innovations brought about by the passing of time.

Scholars who have studied folk oral art have noted and continue to mention that fairy tales are a widespread genre among all peoples of the world. Fairy tales are based on professional performance. In ancient times, fairy tales were told by elderly, attentive, and improvisational individuals capable of performing at a specific time of year. In Uzbek and Kazakh folklore, storytellers are called "storytellers". First, people who knew how to tell folk tales told them. Regarding this, the Karakalpak folklorist N. Davkarayev wrote: "Fairy tales are easy to memorize and tell, so they were numerous. In the Karakalpak tradition, there were no storytellers who made fairy tales their profession. But there are many attentive people and skilled storytellers who know many fairy tales". [5:175] In fact, there was no one who specifically told fairy tales. Because people who had the ability to tell fairy tales, who could enrich the fairy tale they heard, add characters, and expand the events, could tell it.

In Karakalpak folklore, folktale performers became known as distinct performers only in later periods. Scholar K. Mambetnazarov, who has specifically researched the fairy tale genre in Karakalpak folklore, says the following about it: "Except for those who don't know fairy tales, it's customary for everyone to tell them. Both young and old tell fairy tales. "However, not everyone who told stories was called a storyteller by the people. Only those who had ten, fifteen, or even more tales in their repertoire were recognized as true storytellers," he said, mentioning among such storytellers his contemporaries: K. Abibullaev from Shymbay, the poet D. Kasimov from Takhtakupir, and T. Allaniyazov and Z. Bekjanov from Nukus.[6:11] It is noteworthy that the plot of the fairy tale is interesting and meaningful. Because any fairy tale is aimed at social and pedagogical influence. Fairy tales provide education and upbringing from childhood, play an important role in developing good qualities in a person, and even heal sorrow in difficult times. In other words, the potential of a fairy tale is significantly richer than its ideological and artistic significance. Among other epic genres of folklore, fairy tales are

distinguished by a more developed aesthetic aspect. The aesthetic principle conveys good qualities in a person, idealizing education and upbringing, and conveying the world of fairy tales in artistic colors and romantic hues.

### References

1. Jarimbetov K. Textbooks on Literary Studies. - Nukus: Karakalpakstan, 2012.
2. Maqsetov K. Karakalpak Folk Art. - Nukus: Bilim, 1996.
3. Gusev V.E. Aesthetics of Folklore. Moscow: 1967.
4. Karakalpak Folklore. 100 volumes Volumes 67-76 Nukus: Ilim, 2014.
5. Davkarayev N. Complete Collection of Works, Volume 2. - Nukus: Karakalpakstan, 1977.
6. Mambetnazarov K. Karakalpak Folk Tales. - Nukus: "Karakalpakstan," 1981.

