



## THE EXPRESSION OF IMPLICIT AND EXPLICIT MEANINGS VIA ZOONYMS IN FOLKLORE TEXTS

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### ABSTRACT

*In this article, the formation of meaning through zoononyms (animal names) in Uzbek folklore texts is analyzed, particularly the interrelation between implicit (hidden, connotative) and explicit (open, denotative) layers. It is interpreted that zoononyms function as a center of universal and local signification in folklore texts, and reveal implicit meaning in connection with cultural competence..*

Zoonyms, or animal names, constitute a crucial element of folklore texts. They do not merely represent the names of actual zoological entities (explicit denotation); they also convey a system of symbols, emblems, and stereotypes that possess a vast connotative field (implicit meaning).

In Uzbek folklore, specific animals carry distinct associations:

- The fox represents cunning;
- The wolf embodies evil or danger;
- The sheep signifies gentleness;
- The horse stands for loyalty and bravery;
- The snake suggests betrayal or secrecy;
- The crow is associated with ominous prophecies;
- The nightingale represents beauty and refined taste.

However, these designations are not static; they are dynamically reinterpreted depending on the genre, situation, plot, and purpose. A functional-pragmatic analysis of zoonyms in oral tradition reveals that animal names in folklore texts serve not only to identify and name animal species but also to generate implicit meanings, evoke figurative senses, and actualize symbolism and metaphorical significance. Yet, these meanings emerge implicitly—without direct expression—relying instead on the presuppositional knowledge of the listener. According to A.A. Potebnya, "There is no direct correspondence between the formal expression of a linguistic sign and its functional meaning; however, it is precisely this characteristic that expands the functional and aesthetic capabilities of language.<sup>1</sup>" Therefore, in the process of forming implicit meanings through zoonyms, linguistic signs are employed

<sup>1</sup> Potebnya, A. A. (1999). *Mysl' i yazyk [Thought and Language]*. Moscow: Labirint. 300 p.

not only in their literal sense but also in figurative and semantically complex meanings that require cognitive analysis.

The expression of implicit meanings through zoonyms possesses unique characteristics across various genres of oral tradition. Zoonyms perform diverse pragmatic functions and generate implicit meanings specific to each genre, including:

- Proverbs: Where they often serve as concise moral metaphors.
- Fairy Tales: Where they act as character archetypes.
- Epics (Dostons): Where they symbolize heroic traits.
- Folk Songs: Where they evoke emotional states.
- Riddles: Where they function as cognitive puzzles.

In proverbs, zoonyms are frequently employed to denote qualities characteristic of humans. In this context, primary attention is directed toward anthropomorphic concepts. For instance, in the proverb "Bo'ri boqqan qo'zidan, ona boqqan qo'zi yaxshi<sup>2</sup>" (A lamb raised by a mother is better than a lamb raised by a wolf), an implicit meaning regarding the importance of upbringing emerges through the juxtaposition of the zoonyms "wolf" and "lamb."

- The Wolf: Generates implicit meanings such as "uncaring," "ruthless," and "indifferent."
- The Lamb: Creates implicit meanings such as "vulnerable," "innocent," and "meek."

Through this proverb, which embodies the foundations of folk pedagogy, profound philosophical meanings concerning the significance of maternal upbringing and the importance of the family environment are expressed implicitly.

In the proverb "It hurar – karvon o'tar<sup>3</sup>" (The dog barks, but the caravan moves on), the implicit meaning of "a person engaging in fruitless, futile action" is conveyed through the medium of the zoonym "dog." In contrast to the dog, the "Caravan" expresses implicit meanings of "steadfastly striving toward a goal" and "majesty." Consequently, the overall meaning of the proverb conveys implicit information to the listener suggesting that "one should not cease progress due to criticism or gossip." In the work *Turkiy guliston yoxud axloq* (Turkic Gulistan or Ethics) by the enlightened writer Abdulla Avloni, this proverb is interpreted as follows:

"There are people in this world, akin to dogs and turtles, who can never tolerate those of higher rank than themselves; they always gaze with envious eyes, and their thoughts and contemplations remain malicious. Indeed, if they perceive in you a virtuous quality or beautiful etiquette, acting shamelessly, they will use any excuse to slander and libel you. One should not concern oneself with such people. As the saying goes, 'The dog barks, but the caravan moves on'—you must remain upon your righteous path!<sup>4</sup>"

In this proverb:

- Explicit Content: Indicates the presence of criticism, noise, or minor obstacles.
- Implicit Meaning: Signifies that despite these hindrances, the endeavor or journey continues on its course.

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<sup>2</sup> O'zbek xalq maqollari [Uzbek Folk Proverbs]. (1989). Tashkent: Fan. 73 p.

<sup>3</sup> O'zbek xalq maqollari [Uzbek Folk Proverbs]. (1989). Tashkent: Fan. 154 p.

<sup>4</sup> Avloniy, A. (1992). *Turkiy guliston yoxud axloq* [Turkic Gulistan or Ethics]. Tashkent: O'qituvchi. 86 p.

In the proverb "Tulki yetmagan uzumni nordon deydi"<sup>5</sup> (The fox calls the grapes it cannot reach sour), the zoonym "fox" generates implicit meanings of "haughty" and "arrogant." The proverb conveys the implicit meaning that individuals often adopt a negative attitude toward objects or goals they fail to attain. Scholar A. Nurmonov emphasizes that in such fixed expressions, "information emerges not merely through independent lexemes, but through their mutual syntagmatic relations. As stable linguistic phenomena, they encapsulate linguocultural codes and are transmitted from one generation to the next."<sup>6</sup>

In the proverb "Sichqon sig'mas iniga, g'alvir bog'lar dumiga"<sup>7</sup> (The mouse cannot fit into its hole, yet ties a sieve to its tail), the zoonym "mouse" expresses implicit meanings such as "hesitant," "fearful," and "weak." The general meaning of the proverb reveals implicit information regarding "acting beyond one's capacity" or "overreaching one's status." This proverb implicitly expresses a crucial human condition: the inability to correctly assess one's own capacities.

The expression of implicit meaning via zoonyms in proverbs ensures linguistic economy. By utilizing zoonyms in a figurative sense instead of their literal meaning, profound content is conveyed within a succinct text, which ultimately guarantees the longevity of these proverbs across centuries. We have now completed the analysis of zoonyms in proverbs.

Gender features also play a significant role in the generation of implicit meanings through zoonyms in folklore texts. Certain zoonyms express implicit meanings associated with masculine markers, while others relate to feminine markers.

- **Masculine Markers (Strength, Courage):** Zoonyms like the tiger (yo'lbars), wolf (bo'ri), lion (arslon), and eagle (burgut) are often used to express implicit meanings such as masculinity, strength, and courage.

- **Feminine Markers (Beauty, Elegance, sometimes Negative Traits):** Zoonyms such as the fox (tulki), myna bird (mayna), peacock (tovus), and nightingale (bulbul), on the other hand, are often used to express traits characteristic of women.

The female scholar Z. Kholmanova, having conducted research in the field of Gender Linguistics and analyzed the gender characteristics of zoonyms, reaches the following conclusion: "The gender marker in zoonyms often manifests implicitly, and this is directly linked to national-cultural concepts. In Uzbek folklore, zoonyms representing masculinity tend to express positive qualities—such as bravery, courage, strength, and reliability—whereas zoonyms representing femininity carry meanings associated with beauty and elegance alongside some meanings possessing negative connotations."<sup>8</sup>

Zoonyms are actively utilized as crucial components of the semantic system in Uzbek folklore texts, reflecting the national worldview, cultural experience, and mental stereotypes. The research demonstrates that animal names are rich not only in denotative content but also possess a powerful implicit-connotative layer. Specifically within folklore texts—including proverbs, riddles, and legends—zoonyms gain semantic expansion as universal information carriers, generating specialized meaning through the local cultural context. Without cultural

<sup>5</sup> O'zbek xalq maqollari [Uzbek Folk Proverbs]. (1989). Tashkent: Fan. 211 p.

<sup>6</sup> Nurmonov, A. (2015). Lingvistik pragmatika va matn tuzish asoslari [Linguistic Pragmatics and the Fundamentals of Text Construction]. Tashkent: Fan. 92 p.

<sup>7</sup> O'zbek xalq maqollari [Uzbek Folk Proverbs]. (1989). Tashkent: Fan. 182 p.

<sup>8</sup> Kholmanova, Z. (2013). O'zbek tilida zoonimlar [Zoonyms in the Uzbek Language]. Tashkent: Navro'z. 102 p.

competence, this hidden semantic load cannot always be fully perceived. Thus, zoonyms form a multi-layered mechanism of meaning creation in folk thought, and the implicit-explicit relationship manifests as the core essence of folklore semantics..

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