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## **DIMINUTIVE FORMS IN TITLES OF RUSSIAN FOLKTALES**

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### **Abstract**

The paper presents findings of the linguistic analysis of Russian folktales. The authors of the paper address a little-known aspect of the folktale - the functioning of diminutive forms in the titles of folktales. The object of the study is a collection "Russian Folktales" of Alexander Afanasyev. The subject of the study is titles of folktales. The aim of this paper is to present diminutive forms as one of the important language features in folktales' titles and to determine their types. This study has been carried out taking into account new trends in linguistic studies which observe the multidimensionality and diversity of linguistic units and allow a more thorough analysis of the world perception by the folktale discourse users. Pursuant to the analysis of linguistic material based on the texts of folktales, the specifics of folktale discourse is determined. The paper analyzes the composition of the titles, classifies various types of suffixes, presents and exemplifies diminutive forms. The most frequent diminutive forms with the suffixes *-ечк*, *-еньк*; *-очк*, *-оньк*; *-ышк*, *-юшк*, *-ушк*; *-ик*; *-ичк* are identified.

### **Keywords**

Russian folktales – Titles – Suffix – Diminutive forms – Linguistic

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## Introduction

Folktales are based on lively folk speech, figurative and exotic language. They are characterized by deep content, national identity and richness of the language. According to E.I. Passov, "Russian folktale is one of the most wide spread genres of folklore narrative. It has an entertaining plot and amazing characters. Due to a feeling of real poetry, the reader opens the world of human emotions and relationships. The folktale nurtures values of kindness and justice. The reader discovers Russian culture, its wise national experience and native language". Folktale discourse, focused on communication, is indeed an early form of artistic communication. "The folktale provides a mean for evaluating the national identity of the ethnic group, the dynamics of mentality's development and linguistic-cultural values. The folktale discourse is understood as a communicative process embedded in a fabulous landscape. Its result is the text which reflects parameters of fabulousness as the category verbalized at different levels of language". Studying the titles of Russian folktales in word formation and syntactic aspects through the conceptual analysis makes possible to identify their universal characteristics, as well as specific features of the national linguistic culture conditioned by some extra-linguistic factors. The purpose of the study is a case study of folktale titles as one of the components of the Russian folktale. In accordance with the purpose, the following tasks are performed: the development of the basic criteria for the study of the folktales titles as one of the most important components of a folktale discourse; a description of linguistic features of folktales titles in Russian folktales; identification of actualization features of the folktale's titles in the collection of A.N. Afanasyev. The novelty of the study is in a conducted linguistic analysis of the Russian folktales' titles; some structural and linguistic-cultural features of folktale texts are revealed.

## Methods

The empirical base of the study is 623 titles of Russian folktales collected by A.N. Afanasyev in three volumes. The following research techniques and methods were implemented in the study: a descriptive method, observation and generalization, an interpretative approach; systematization and classification; functional, comparative and statistical analysis.

## Results and discusion

The most complete and accurate definition of the folktale in our study is given by A.N. Afanasyev: "A folktale is an epic oral piece of fiction, primarily prosaic; magical, adventurous, or domestic in nature, with elements of fable. The last feature distinguishes a folktale from other genres of narration: a story, a legend and a bailichka, that is, from the stories presented by the narrator to the listeners as a succession of events that actually happened, however unlikely and fantastic they were". One of the most important components of a folktale is its title. "Titles make easier for the reader and listener to perceive, create an image, get ideas and themes of the text. In the titles of the studied texts folktales focus on the reader's aesthetic perception and life experience. Unexpectedly for the reader, the title of the text take on an unfamiliar new meaning which the author imposes on the emotional sphere of the reader with the help of his own view of life". Therefore, the analysis of the folktales titles is the first step to understanding the content of folktales. This part of the folktale is a communicative-cognitive "window" for exploring unknown areas. Familiarity with the title precedes acquaintance with the text of the folktale. Although the title is the first selected element of the text, it is positioned above or on top of all the text, rather than in its beginning. It "stands outside the time sequence of the action".

In our opinion, within this context it is essential to start the study of the language of Russian folktales with their titles - the first object the reader and the listener will meet. This is the primary information about the text which should convey the summary of the content and pique the future reader and listener's interest. The text is closely related to its title. As L. S. Vygotsky claims, the title is a text's dominant "which defines the construction of a story". By definition of I. R. Halperin, the title is "compressed, undisclosed text content". Consequently, in addition to stimulating interest among readers, titles of folktales highlight the main characters; show the relationship between characters, characters and objects with the help of special linguistic means.

The study's results demonstrate that the titles often include words with diminutive suffixes. Apparently, this is reasoned by both the word formation aspect and the author's attitude to the character and the object.

"Undoubtedly, the suffix is a dominant object in modern studies of word formation. Moreover, in the aggregate, Russian denominatives united by evaluative semantics and an expressive-characterizing function, have been considered a highly productive word formation category of subjective assessment related to the modification type" [8, p.1346]. Specific suffixes with a modification type of meaning can be distinguished among the large number of Russian suffixes. They add the meaning of affection and diminutiveness to the word's semantics, thus giving a special shade to its original meaning. «Very often one and the same derivative attracts meanings of the different words. L.V. Krasilnikova states that a family of words (a word-formative nest) should be considered as a special multi-component frame comprising a specific set of concepts, as it relates to the vast or rather definite denotative area full of extra linguistic realities and relevant concepts».

The diminutive form is associated with the word or a form of words that convey the subjective evaluation of small size, volume, etc. Our findings confirm that the presence of plentitude of diminutive words is a feature of the titles of Russian folktales in the collection edited by A.N. Afanasyev. It is known that the diminutive form in Russian is most often formed with the help of special suffixes, through which the author can express emotions and assessment, his/her attitude to the characters or to the plot of a folktale. By using diminutive words A.N. Afanasyev can understand nature of the characters, their emotional state and the situation's context.

One of the typical examples of the use of the diminutive forms is a communicative situation of addressing or expressing an attitude towards loved ones. Instead of the word *сын* (a son), forms *сынуля*, *сыночек* (*synulya*, *synochek*) are often used; instead of the word *дочь* (a daughter) - *доченька*, *дочурка* (*dochen'ka*, *dochurka*). The main goal of using diminutive forms with suffixes is the expression of a subjective assessment in colloquial, expressively colored speech. Diminutive forms, as we have shown above, are often used to express intimate relationships. The following groups of diminutive forms by gender are distinguished.

Suffixes of masculine nouns: 1) -ок- / -ёк- / -ек- (-ok- / -yok- / -yek-); 2) -ик (-ik); 3) -чик- (-chik-); 4) -ец- (-yets-); 5) -очек- (-ochek-); 6) -ышк- / -ушк- (-yshk- / -ushk-);

Suffixes of feminine nouns: 1) -к- (-k-); 2) -ц- (-ts-); 3) -ичк- (-ichk-); 4) -очк- / -ечк- (-ochk- / -yechk-); 5) -ньк- (-n'k-); 6) -ушк- / -юшк- (-ushk- / -yushk-); 7) -еночк- (-yenchok-); 8) -урк- (-urk-); 9) -ус- / -ул- (-us- / -ul-);

The suffixes of the neuter nouns: 1) -к(-k-); 2) -ц/-ец/-иц- (-ts -/- yets - / - its-); 3) -ышк-/ишк-(-yshk -/-ishk-); 4) -ушк-/юшк-(-ushk-/-yushk-); 5) -ечк-(-yechk-). Suffixes of adjectives: -оньк/-еньк- (-on'k / -en'k-).

Colloquial speech, jargons, dialects have not only separate words, but also whole word-formation types that are not characteristic of the literary language and therefore not studied or studied poorly. Especially weak study is characteristic for the derivatives with stylistically reduced suffixes. However, such derivatives need, of course, some deep analysis, as they participate in the development of an important layer of Russian vocabulary - expressive-evaluative nominations, which clearly reflect the mental values of native speakers.

The use of diminutive forms in Russian folktales is a key feature of the people's language. The titles of Russian folktales contain such diminutive suffixes as -очк, -ечк, -ик, -ок, -инк, -уш (-ochk, -yechk, -ik, -ok, -ink, -ush). Thereby the author encourages readers and listeners to feel positive and affectionate about the book's characters. For example, diminutive *Alyonushka* and *Ivanushka* (*Ivashko*) are formed from the full form of the names Alyona and Ivan (the folktale "The Sister Alyonushka, Brother Ivanushka"). The choice of the diminutive form of the title depends on intensity of the author's feelings. Diminutive forms and hypocorisms allow expressing a wide range of emotional spectrum in folktales.

Suffixes **-ечк, -еньк** (-echk, -enk): These suffixes are used after soft consonants, sibilants, and vowels. For example: «*Крошечка-Хаврошечка*», (*Kroshiechka-Khavroshechka* or *Wee Little Khavroshechka*), «*Терешечка*» (*Teryoshechka*), «*Три копейчки*» (*Three Pennies*).

Suffixes **-очк, -оньк** (-ochk, -on'k): These suffixes are used in all other cases. For example: «*Чудесная дудочка*» (*Wonderful Penny Trumpet*), «*Райская дудочка*» (*Paradise Penny Trumpet*), «*За лапоток – курочку, за курочку - гусочку*» (*Get Chicken for Bast Shoes, Get a Goose for Chicken*).

Suffix **-ул** (-ul): This suffix is often used to form a diminutive form of personal nouns and kinship terminology. E.g.: *сынуля* (son), *мамуля* (mom), *бабуля* (grandma), *дедуля* (grandpa).

Suffix **-ышк, -юшк, -ушк** (-yshk, -yushk, -ushk): The suffix *-ышк* is typical for neuter nouns derived from nouns with a stem ending in a hard consonant; *-юшк* (-yushk) is typical for nouns with a stem ending in a soft consonant; the suffix *ушк/-юшк*(-ushk) is characteristic for nouns of masculine and feminine genders. For example: «*Лутонюшка*» (*Lutonyushka*), «*О иванушке-дурачке*» (*Ivanushka the Fool*), «*Буренушка*» (*Burenushka*).

Suffix **-ик** (-ik): If the vowel sound "и" is preserved when changing a word, then the suffix *-ик* is used. For example: *солдатик* – *солдатика*, *домик* – *домика*.

The suffix **-ичк** (ichk): The suffix *-ичк* is found in feminine nouns derived from the words with the suffix *-иц* (-its), for example: «*Лисичка-сестричка и волк*» (*Sister Fox and Wolf*).

Determination of derivational productivity of a group of words variety of factors can be noticed: the number of derivatives in the derivational paradigm and in the derivational

nest; the part of speech, which represent the derivative words; semantic structure of the word; semantic meaning of derivatives, etc. But it deserves a special attention to derivational potential of such forms in semantic aspect. In this regard, shades of meaning, as a rule, continue to develop in words with a suffix which may be a reflection of the general trend in the development of a language. As can be seen from the examples listed above, the active use of hypocorisms with different suffixes indicates the speech competence of the Russian people. Thereby, people change the form of the word as well as the vector of its emotional expression and semantic gradient by using suffixes.

## Summary

In summary, the study indicates that plentitude of diminutive forms with the suffixes *-ечк, -еньк; -очк, -оньк; -ышк, -юшк, -ушк; -ик; -ичк* are used in the titles of Russian folktales. They express various emotions and demonstrate the attitude of the author towards the characters.

These forms are often used for the nomination of characters, animals and objects. Special attitude of the author towards characters is evidenced by diminutive forms of their names, e.g., «О Иванушке-дурачке» (Ivanushka the Fool); «Сестрица Алёнушка, братец Иванушка» (The Sister Alyonushka, Brother Ivanushka). Animals in folktales are not just animate; they are personified, i.e. presented in human form. Moreover, titles of folktales manifest the attitude towards inanimate things as animate. «Perhaps the most obvious ontological metaphors are those where the physical object is further specified as being a person. This allows us to comprehend a wide variety of experiences with nonhuman entities in terms of human motivations, characteristics, and activities». For example, «Буренушка» (Burenushka); «Смерть петушка» (Death of the Cockerel); «Курочка» (The Little Hen), «Чудесная дудочка» (The Magic Reed pipe). «Russian hypocorisms include a rather wide circle of the derivative vocabulary. Their word formation and functional features have been examined by researchers for a long time». Interpretation of titles with the diminutive forms of words is more complex than their perception in the main text of the folktale. The word-forming units which are observed in this paper have a high potential for expressiveness and information value. The diminutive words in the titles and texts of Russian folktales help the author to express good attitude towards the characters and love to the world.

## Conclusions

Pursuant to the aforesaid, it is emphasized that at present the folktale does not only educate and develop the speech skills of children but also reflects Russian mentality. «The national culture is studied through language». In view of this, studies of folktales' texts are essential in teaching Russian as a foreign language, too. «It is known that the Russian fairy-tale as one of the main genres of folklore contains the richest historical, ethnographic and cultural background material, the analysis of which within the framework of teaching of Russian as a foreign language, allows us to make sense of the phenomenon of not only the Russian fairy-tale, but also the Russian national character». The title of a folktale is a semantic gist of a story and can be considered as a key to its understanding. Its uniqueness lies in the fact that it plays the role of an intermediary between the entitled text, the body of previous texts that form the vertical context of this collection, and the reader. «As the embryonic plant in the process of growth unfolds multiplying leaves one by one, so the title opens the book gradually, sheet by sheet: the book is indeed the expanded title, the title is a summary of the book concentrated in two or three words».

There are special relations between the title and the text of folktales: the title precedes the text and requires returning to it after reading the entire text. The main meaning of the title is always understood in comparison with the whole text already read. Adapting the texts of folktales, A.N. Afanasyev paid special attention to the titles and language means that titles included.

Overall, the study of the titles of Russian folktales can help us better understand the content of the folktale and the attitude of the author and Russian people to its heroes. On this assumption we can say that at the present time Russian folktales are of great practical importance to society.

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