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SEMANTICS OF ADJECTIVE DEGREES OF COMPARISON IN SMALL GENRES OF RUSSIAN FOLKLORE

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Abstract

The semantics of adjective degrees of comparison occupies an important place in the linguistic organization of Russian folklore. Comparative and superlative adjective forms not only express different levels of quality but also perform evaluative, expressive, and stylistic functions in oral folk traditions. This study examines the semantic characteristics of adjective degrees of comparison in small genres of Russian folklore, including proverbs, sayings, riddles, and tongue twisters. A qualitative descriptive approach was applied to analyze folklore texts with emphasis on the contextual meaning and communicative role of comparative constructions. The findings indicate that comparative adjectives are predominantly used to express moral evaluation, contrast, and practical wisdom, whereas superlative forms intensify emotional expressiveness and emphasize the highest degree of a particular quality. Positive adjectives mainly serve descriptive functions in folklore discourse. The study concludes that adjective degrees of comparison constitute an essential semantic mechanism through which Russian folklore conveys cultural values, national traditions, and collective experience. The results contribute to a better understanding of the interaction between grammar, semantics, and folklore discourse.

Keywords: semantics, adjective, degrees of comparison, Russian folklore, proverbs, sayings, riddles, stylistics, linguistic analysis, folklore discourse.

Introduction

Language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a reflection of a nation's cultural heritage and worldview. Russian folklore, particularly its small genres such as proverbs, sayings, riddles, and tongue twisters, preserves traditional knowledge, moral values, and collective experience through concise yet expressive linguistic forms. Among the grammatical devices that contribute to the richness of folklore discourse, adjective degrees of comparison occupy a significant place due to their ability to express evaluation, contrast, and intensity [1].The semantics of adjective degrees of comparison extends beyond their grammatical function of indicating different levels of quality. In folklore texts, comparative and superlative forms often acquire figurative and symbolic meanings, allowing speakers to emphasize wisdom, moral judgment, personal qualities, and social values. Such semantic transformations make comparative constructions an important stylistic resource that enhances the emotional and persuasive impact of oral tradition [2].

Although Russian folklore has been extensively studied from cultural, literary, and linguistic perspectives, the semantic functions of adjective degrees of comparison in small folklore genres have received comparatively limited scholarly attention. Most previous studies have focused on lexical meaning, phraseological units, or stylistic features, while the interaction between grammatical comparison and semantic interpretation remains insufficiently explored [3].The relevance of this research lies in the necessity to examine adjective comparison as both a grammatical and semantic phenomenon within folklore discourse. Understanding how comparative constructions function in proverbs, sayings, riddles, and other small folklore genres contributes to a deeper comprehension of the relationship between language, cognition, and culture.The aim of this study is to investigate the semantic features of adjective degrees of comparison in small genres of Russian folklore and to

determine their role in expressing evaluation, emotional intensity, figurative meaning, and cultural values.

Main Part

The semantic structure of adjective degrees of comparison in Russian small folklore genres demonstrates a close relationship between grammatical form and communicative meaning. Unlike ordinary descriptive texts, folklore expressions use comparative and superlative adjectives not only to indicate differences in quality but also to convey cultural evaluations, ethical principles, and collective life experience. The semantic interpretation of these forms depends on the context in which they appear and on the communicative purpose of the folklore genre [4].Among the analyzed folklore materials, comparative adjectives were most frequently identified in proverbs and sayings. These forms primarily express comparison between human qualities, behavior, and social values. For example, comparisons emphasizing wisdom, honesty, diligence, or courage enable speakers to evaluate situations indirectly while preserving the figurative and concise nature of folklore. Such constructions contribute to the didactic function of proverbs by encouraging moral reflection rather than direct instruction [5].

Superlative adjectives perform a different semantic role. Their principal function is to intensify emotional expression and highlight exceptional characteristics. In many folklore texts, the superlative degree symbolizes the highest manifestation of positive or negative qualities, thereby strengthening the expressive power of the statement. The semantic value of these forms often exceeds their grammatical meaning, becoming a rhetorical device that attracts attention and increases the memorability of oral expressions [6].The analysis also revealed that positive-degree adjectives remain dominant in riddles and tongue twisters, where descriptive precision is more important than explicit comparison. Nevertheless, even these adjectives frequently acquire metaphorical meanings through the cultural context of folklore. This observation indicates that the semantic interpretation of adjectives depends not only on grammatical structure but also on the interaction between language, tradition, and collective cognition [7].

Overall, the semantic analysis confirms that adjective degrees of comparison constitute an essential component of Russian folklore discourse. They facilitate evaluation, create vivid imagery, strengthen emotional impact, and preserve traditional cultural concepts. Consequently, comparative constructions should be regarded not merely as grammatical categories but also as important semantic and stylistic instruments that shape the expressive nature of folklore communication [8]

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that the semantics of adjective degrees of comparison plays a significant role in the linguistic and stylistic organization of Russian small folklore genres. Comparative and superlative adjective forms extend beyond their grammatical function by expressing evaluation, emotional intensity, and figurative meaning. These semantic features contribute to the communicative effectiveness of proverbs, sayings, riddles, and other folklore expressions.The analysis revealed that comparative adjectives are predominantly used to convey moral judgments and social values, whereas superlative forms emphasize exceptional qualities and enhance expressive force. Positive-degree adjectives mainly fulfill descriptive functions but often acquire symbolic meanings within the cultural context of folklore. Thus, the semantic interpretation of adjective comparison depends on both grammatical structure and communicative context.In conclusion, adjective degrees of comparison represent an important semantic resource through which Russian folklore preserves collective experience, national traditions, and cultural identity. Further research involving larger folklore corpora and comparative studies across different languages may provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between grammar, semantics, and folklore discourse.

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