

Use of Antonyms in Folk Tales

Esonov Rustam

3rd-year doctoral student at Kokand State Pedagogical Institute, Uzbekistan

Received: 13 June 2025; **Accepted:** 09 July 2025; **Published:** 11 August 2025

Abstract: The largest lexical group in the language of fairy tales is formed by antonyms, which is related to the genre features of the fairy tale. The plot of a fairy tale is built on the formation of opposing sides and their struggle, and opposition constitutes the basis of its artistic poetics. Antonyms enhance the expressiveness of the fairy tale.

Keywords: Antonym, fairy tale, antithesis, folk, text, feature.

Introduction: Antonyms are pairs of units belonging to the same part of speech that are formed on the basis of opposite meanings. The wide use of antonymy in folk tales is very similar to that of synonyms. When speaking about words being in an antonymic relationship, it should be understood that not all meanings are meant, but usually only one specific meaning. In the language of fairy tales, the largest lexical group is formed by antonyms, and this is related to the genre features of the fairy tale. The plot of a fairy tale is built on the

formation of opposing sides and their struggle, and opposition forms the basis of its artistic poetics. In folk tales, a large number of antonyms with different roots and antonyms with the same root are distinguished. Antonyms are often used within a single sentence. This phenomenon is especially common in Uzbek folk tales. Antonyms with different roots. This type of antonym has different word roots but is semantically opposite to each other:

Antonym pair	Example phrase (excerpt from a fairy tale)	Reference
good – bad	“Everyone was kind to the good girl Zumrad, but no one liked the bad Qimmat.”	Zumrad va Qimmat // O‘zbek xalq ertaklari. – Toshkent: Yozuvchi, 1982. – B. 23.
white – black	“The white bird would bring good fortune, while the black bird would bring sorrow.”	Qora qush va oq qush // O‘zbek xalq ertaklari. – Toshkent: Fan, 1978. – B. 17.
big – small	“Even if it is big, the work should be started small,” said the old man.	Donishmand chol // O‘zbek xalq ertaklari. – Toshkent: O‘qituvchi, 1980. – B. 8.
friend – enemy	“He did not know whether that person was a friend or an enemy.”	Boy ila gado // O‘zbek xalq ertaklari. – Toshkent: Fan, 1971. – B. 35.
fast – slow	“He ran fast but forgot how to walk slowly.”	Tulki va tipratikan // O‘zbek xalq ertaklari. – Toshkent: Yozuvchi, 1979. – B. 15.
straight – crooked	“Only the one who chooses the straight path reaches the destination, while the crooked path leads astray.”	Oqibatli yigit // O‘zbek xalq ertaklari. – Toshkent: O‘qituvchi, 1983. – B. 21.
hungry – full	“A hungry person does not understand the state of a full person.”	Och va to‘q // O‘zbek xalq ertaklari. –

These antonyms create the contrast between characters in fairy tales (good and bad); reveal the moral idea of the fairy tale (friend and enemy); produce dramatic conflict (white and black); and emphasize the internal logic of complex events (straight and crooked).

Single-root (affixal) antonyms. These antonyms share the same word root but express opposition through affixes. They have the same root, but are formed by negative or oppositional affixes, and are mainly used in verb forms. Such antonyms not only convey semantic opposition but also create rhythm and imagery in spoken language.

In folk tales, we can also encounter antonymic

numerals such as one–forty, and antonymic adverbs such as few–many. As we know, numerals indicate the number, quantity, and order of objects. It is clear that they cannot be semantically opposite. However, there may be a very large difference between numbers, and they can combine to form antonymic pairs, which belong to the paradigm of antonymic pairs.

Antonyms enhance the expressiveness of a fairy tale. One of the features characteristic of fairy-tale language is the frequent use of paired words and antonyms, that is, complex antonyms. In English fairy tales, such cases are observed quite often.

Antonym Pair (Murakkab antonim)	Meaning	Example from fairy tale
rich and poor	boy va kambag'al	"He was kind to rich and poor alike." (Jack and the Beanstalk)
big or small	katta yoki kichik	"No job was too big or small for the clever tailor." (The Brave Little Tailor)
young and old	yosh va qari	"Everyone, young and old, came to hear the story."
good and evil	yaxshilik va yomonlik	"It was a tale of good and evil, where good always wins." (Cinderella)
right and wrong	to'g'ri va noto'g'ri	"He couldn't tell right from wrong, yet he ruled the land."
night and day	tun va kun	"The castle stood silent through night and day."
high and low	yuqori va past / jamiyatdagi tabaqalar	"They searched high and low, but the golden goose was gone." (The Golden Goose)
near and far	yaqin va uzoq	"From near and far, people came to see the dragon." (St. George and the Dragon)
up and down	yuqoriga va pastga	"He ran up and down the beanstalk." (Jack and the Beanstalk)
here and there	u yoq bu yoq	"She looked for her lost ring here and there."

Complex antonyms express opposing meanings between two components, but they do not mutually exclude each other; they differ only in quality. Such opposing words form paired nouns that convey meanings of generalization and aggregation.

The above antonyms are used to indicate an average or intermediate quality, characteristic, or time between

two opposite things. The use of paired words is a feature of the folklore style.

Antonyms are the most important lexical tool through which an antithesis (a comparison of contrasting concepts) can be created.

Antithesis is "based on the opposition of concepts and consists of phrases, sentences, and complex syntactic

structures; its lexical basis is formed by antonyms, while its syntactic basis is formed by the parallelism of constructions.” Based on this definition, we will

examine in the following table the stylistic device of antithesis used by the storyteller in folk tales:

Antithetical excerpt	Lexical oppositions	Syntactic parallelism	Reference
“The rich ate and ate but was never satisfied, the poor drank and drank but never filled up.”	rich – poor; was never satisfied – never filled up	“ate and ate but was never satisfied” and “drank and drank but never filled up”	O‘zbek xalq ertaklari. – T.: G‘afur G‘ulom nomidagi nashriyot, 2006. – 118-bet.
“A wise man measures his words before speaking, but a fool speaks first and then thinks.”	wise – fool; measures before speaking – thinks later	“measures his words before speaking” and “speaks first and then thinks”	O‘zbek xalq ertaklari. – T.: G‘afur G‘ulom nomidagi nashriyot, 2006. – 89-bet.
“The sun is the father of the day, the moon is the mother of the night.”	sun – moon; day – night; father – mother	“The sun is the father of the day” and “the moon is the mother of the night”	O‘zbek xalq ertaklari. – T.: G‘afur G‘ulom nomidagi nashriyot, 2006. – 45-bet.
“The good brother found bread and gave it, the bad brother took the bread away.”	good – bad; gave – took	“found bread and gave it” and “took the bread away”	O‘zbek xalq ertaklari. – T.: G‘afur G‘ulom nomidagi nashriyot, 2006. – 66-bet.
“A father gives from the heart, but a king takes by force.”	gives from the heart – takes by force	“A father ... gives” and “a king ... takes”	O‘zbek xalq ertaklari. – T.: G‘afur G‘ulom nomidagi nashriyot, 2006. – 104-bet.

Multi-component antitheses contain a verb + adjective (or substantive or adverb).

It is evident that antithesis is used in all types of folk tales. The antonyms in fairy tales ensure their vivid expression and emotional impact.

REFERENCES

Хасбулатова З.А. Антонимы в кумыкском языке (лексико- грамматический и стилистический аспекты): дис. ... канд. филол. наук. - Ма-хачкала: УРАН ДНЦ, 2011. - 38 с.

Максимов В.И. Стилистические ресурсы семантики лексических единиц // Стилистика и литературное редактирование / под ред. проф. В. И. Максимова. - 3-е изд., перераб. и доп. - М.: Гардарики, 2007. - С. 183.

ЎТИЛ. 5 жилдлик. 1-жилд. – Тошкент: Ўзбекистон миллий энциклопедияси, 2006. – Б.530.

Потебня А.А. Об изменении значения и заменах

существительного // Из записок по русской грамматике. - М., 1968. - Т. 2. - 68 с