

Classification And Functions Of The Genre System In Children's Folklore

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Abstract: This article analyzes the genre structure of adult and children's folklore as two interconnected yet functionally distinct layers of folk culture. It examines the characteristics of genre classification, which reveal patterns in the development of folk art within the context of society's age-related, psychological, and cultural needs. Adult folklore is represented by labor, ritual, family-domestic, and historical genres that reflect the social experience, worldview, and value system of the people. Children's folklore, based on playful, rhythmic, and educational texts (nursery rhymes, counting-out rhymes, chants, lullabies, tall tales), serves communicative, cognitive, and educational functions, contributing to the development of children's speech, thinking, emotional sphere, and social behavior.

The work emphasizes the continuity of genre models: children's folklore inherits the artistic features of adult folklore while simultaneously adapting them according to children's age characteristics. Special attention is paid to the multifaceted functional nature of genres, as well as their role in shaping moral values, cultural identity, and creative imagination in children. Based on the works of G. S. Vinogradov, M. P. Cherednikova, and other researchers, the poetics and functions of lullabies, counting rhymes, and riddles in Russian and Uzbek traditions are analyzed. It is concluded that children's folklore represents a holistic pedagogical and artistic system that ensures the continuity of cultural memory and the transmission of values from generation to generation.

Keywords: Genre composition, nursery rhymes, counting rhymes, call-and-response songs, lullabies, nonsense verses, structure, children's folklore.

Introduction: The genre structure of folklore represents a complex and multifaceted organism that reflects the peculiarities of people's worldview, collective experience, and artistic thinking.

The classification of adult and children's folklore genres allows for the identification of patterns in the functioning of folk art across different age levels of culture.

Adult folklore primarily focuses on understanding the labor, ritual, and social aspects of life. Its genres - work songs, family and everyday life songs, historical songs, ritual texts, legends, epics, proverbs, and sayings - express a stable system of values of the people, shaping their moral and ethical guidelines.

Children's folklore, on the contrary, has a playful, entertaining, and educational character. It is based on nursery rhymes, lullabies, counting rhymes, teasing rhymes, call-and-response songs, and tall tales - texts designed to develop the child's speech skills, aesthetic taste, and emotional responsiveness. Through playful forms, folklore prepares the child for perceiving more complex phenomena of adult culture.

Despite functional differences, both types of folklore are united by common artistic means: rhythmization of speech, repetition, sound symbolism, metaphoricity, and an emphasis on collective creativity. Children's folklore largely inherits the traditions of adult folklore, being their adapted form that contributes to the transmission of cultural and moral values from

generation to generation.

Based on this observation, it is appropriate to distinguish two main groups of children's folklore:

1. Adult folklore.
2. Children's folklore.

Classification of these layers allows us to identify differences not only in form and content but also in the functions they perform.

Classification of adult and children's folklore genres reveals both continuity and functional differences between them. The main genre models of children's folklore largely replicate forms of adult folk art but are adapted to account for children's age and psychological characteristics. Thus, fairy tales, proverbs, songs, or riddles retain their basic structural principles but acquire playful, educational, and developmental orientations.

Adult folklore reflects life experiences, social relations, labor, and ritual spheres, expressing the collective worldview of the people. Children's folklore, on the other hand, transfers these values to the realm of play and communication, primarily serving educational, developmental, and socializing functions. Through the poetics of rhythm, repetition, sound patterns, and imagery, children gradually become acquainted with the language of folk culture, mastering behavioral norms and ways of thinking established in tradition. Here's an example of adult folklore:

- Work songs - reflect labor activities and collective cooperation, for example, Russian plowing songs or songs about fishermen;
- Ritual texts - celebrate traditions and rituals (carols, wedding songs, funeral chants);
- Proverbs and sayings - convey folk wisdom and experiences of social interaction ("Without effort, you won't pull a fish out of a pond," "Tell me who your friend is...")

Examples of children's folklore:

- Counting rhymes and rhythmic games - like "Eeny, meeny, miny, moe..." - help children master counting, rhythm, and social rules of the game;
- Teasing rhymes and nursery rhymes develop humor, communication skills, and wit (e.g., "Little bug, little bug, where's your hat?");
- Lullabies accustom children to speech rhythm, create emotional connection, and reinforce norms of care and attachment;
- Playful songs and riddles introduce folk plots and images, shaping ideas about the world and morality.

These examples illustrate how adult folklore directly

reflects life experiences and social relationships, while children's folklore "translates" these values into a playful and developmental form while maintaining cultural continuity.

It is important to note that similar genres are found in almost all folk traditions, differing mainly in their names and local characteristics. All genres of children's folklore, based on their structure, ideological and artistic features, ways of reflecting reality, and degree of coverage, predominantly belong to the lyrical type and collectively form a unified genre system.

Children's folklore encompasses both poetic and prose works created for children, regardless of their length and form. It serves not only as an important means of developing a child's speech and thinking but also as an effective tool for fostering active imagination, emotional responsiveness, and moral values. Through folklore, children acquire the foundations of moral values, folk wisdom, and cultural traditions, as well as develop the ability to understand and evaluate the world around them.

It should be emphasized that the interaction between adult and children's folklore involves not only the direct transmission of genre forms but also their creative adaptation within the children's environment. By borrowing existing texts, motifs, and images, children adapt them to suit their play and communication needs, simplifying their rhythm, imagery, and expressive means. Thus, children's folklore is not a passive reflection of adult folklore, but rather an independent layer of folk art that develops according to its own principles and performs unique functions in the process of cultural continuity.

Each genre of children's folklore serves a specific function. For instance, the content of amusing stories, which includes elements of moral and social reasoning, influences a child's developing consciousness. This, in turn, stimulates processes of rational and constructive thinking. Such works are particularly significant for the development of moral qualities in children at various stages of their psychological formation.

In folklore samples for young children aged 3 to 6, familiarization with basic colors, alphabet letters, and numbers typically plays a leading role. These samples often feature repetitive sounds and words, set phrases, and "question-answer" structures. Additionally, they include short songs with few words, traditional religious stories explaining natural or social phenomena, myths with gods as protagonists, and very brief traditional fairy tales and proverbs that convey moral lessons through the behavior of animals or birds as characters.

Children's folklore is primarily playful in nature, as

children perform all actions through play. Play activities develop imagination and character. For example, in narrative play, a child tries to repeat or reproduce what they see every day within their family. They imitate adult behavior. In role-playing, the child attempts to comprehend their experiences and navigate them meaningfully, which leads to developing new relationships with themselves.

Children's images in folklore serve several functions: they reflect the child's daily life, their games, relationships with peers and adults, model behavioral situations, and reinforce the norms of collective experience. As a result, children's folklore becomes not only a form of entertainment but also an important tool for socialization, transmitting cultural values and traditions from generation to generation.

Based on play activities, a child develops a number of new psychological formations. These are, first and foremost, imagination and the symbolic function of consciousness, which allow a child to transfer properties of one phenomenon to another in their actions, and to substitute one object for another. The individual development of children provides the basis for the concept put forward by L.S. Vygotsky: "The consciousness of a creative individual striving for the future is prepared by creative imagination embodied in the present."

In modern children's games, one can observe an interesting phenomenon of using taunts against negative characters from fairy tales. The reasons for this phenomenon are justly associated with the social nature of this genre of oral folk art, as noted by E.M. Vereshchagin in his time: "People began to view riddles as idle mental exercises and left them almost exclusively to children, beings who are just opening their eyes to the surrounding world. For adults, traditional riddles have long lost their significance and have irreversibly passed into the children's repertoire. Therefore, modern riddles should be studied as part of children's folklore. In our literature, riddles are presented in a dual manner."

In the modern children's repertoire, both old and new riddles retain the traditional form of a brief, rhythmically organized description, as well as an allegorical representation of an object or phenomenon. The riddle develops children's quick-wittedness and teaches them, through accessible means, to understand objects and phenomena of the world in their connection and interdependence.

Lullabies are among the most ancient genres of children's folklore that have maintained a stable form and functional purpose for centuries. Their primary function is to lull a child to sleep; however, the

significance of this genre is not limited to its utilitarian role. For instance: Lullabies of both peoples demonstrate a close connection with the adult world. Uzbek "Alla" and Russian lullabies contain wishes for the child's health, happiness, and protection from evil forces, which confirms the continuity between adult and children's folklore genres. The singing was accompanied by the rocking of the cradle and aimed to put the child to sleep. Improvisation also played a significant role in lullabies: they were sung until the child fell asleep. At the same time, traditional, established texts were of great importance.

As G.S. Vinogradov noted, lullabies fulfill not only a domestic but also an educational function, contributing to the formation of a child's first perceptions of the world and social relationships. They reflect the people's traditional views on childhood, family relationships, good and evil, as well as beliefs associated with protecting an infant from hostile forces.

The artistic characteristics of lullabies are defined by the simplicity and rhythm of poetic speech, the use of established formulas (like "bayu-bayushki"), diminutive and affectionate vocabulary, as well as imagery from nature and domestic animals. E.M. Vereshchagin emphasized that it is through these genres that a child first encounters poetic speech, its emotional coloring, and rhythm. The repetitive melodic structure not only creates a calming effect but also contributes to the formation of the child's first aesthetic impressions and the development of hearing and speech.

Modern researchers (M.A. Kravtsova, L.N. Vinogradova, S.Yu. Neklyudov) point out the multifaceted nature of lullaby functions: from the psychological impact that ensures a child's peaceful sleep to the preservation of traditional cultural images and symbols in collective memory.

Thus, counting rhymes (sanamalar) became widespread in both Russian and Uzbek traditions. Such as:

Eniki-beniki ate vareniki,

Eniki-beniki - bam!

Seryozha went out to catch a hedgehog,

But landed in a cucumber - that's the end!

One, two, three - look at the grass,

Four, five - we'll jump and prance!

Six, seven - a bird in the sky for all to see,

Eight, nine, ten - we'll sing wonderful songs with glee!

Bir, ikki, uch - chumchuq uchdi, qush uchdi..."

("One, two, three - a sparrow flew, a bird flew...").

These counting rhymes occupy an important place in the system of children's folklore, performing both playful and educational functions. Short rhythmic texts used by children for role distribution or choosing a leader accompany the start of the game, create a special emotional mood in participants, and contribute to the development of memory, sense of rhythm, and speech coordination.

Such works demonstrate characteristic features of Russian counting rhymes - rhyming, clear rhythmic organization, rich sound patterns, as well as the presence of nonsensical or playful expressions (for example, "eniki-beniki"), creating a comic effect and ease of memorization. Unlike Uzbek sanamalars, where the main focus is on musicality and song intonation, Russian counting rhymes are closer to conversational rhythm and often contain unexpected everyday images and elements of absurd humor, making them particularly appealing to children's perception.

Thus, already in 1925, G. S. Vinogradov, in his article "Children's Play Preludes," noted that counting rhymes fundamentally differ from other "groups" of children's folklore (amusing, satirical, everyday, and calendar), as they "do not live a completely independent life," but enter "as a component part of a more complex formation - a game," performing an important function - "to select someone from among the players to perform a difficult role." It is precisely this "auxiliary" character, as the scholar wrote, that determines the specificity of this genre. The "applied function" of counting rhymes is also discussed in the article dedicated to this genre in the well-known dictionary "Eastern Slavic Folklore: Dictionary of Scientific and Folk Terminology."

The specification of the counting rhyme function in the game, also given by G. S. Vinogradov, is of fundamental importance: a counting rhyme is "a form of divination in one of its varieties". The researcher considered this function so significant that he even suggested including it in the genre's name and calling it "divination-counters". He also linked the origin of counting rhymes to incantations, fortune-telling, and prophecies. "Attempts to examine divination-counters in a way close to us, adults, are hardly possible if we don't bring them closer to incantations, fortune-telling, and prophecies."

V. P. Anikin and M. N. Melnikov held a similar view on the origin of counting rhymes, noting that in later folklore, they became a game and amusement. Examining the texts of counting rhymes and their verbal structure, G. S. Vinogradov also convincingly demonstrated that the language of counting rhymes can be defined as poetic speech, and the text as an

aesthetically formulated verbal expression.

G. S. Vinogradov's discovery of the multifunctional nature of the counting rhyme genre was further developed and refined in the works of M. P. Cherednikova. In her article "The Meaning and 'Nonsense' of Counting Rhymes (on the Problem of Poetics)," the researcher examines not only the manifestation of an aesthetic function in nonsensical forms, comic images, and the specific poetic logic of counting rhymes, but also highlights their other significant functions - mnemonic and ethical. According to Cherednikova, the counting rhyme becomes a kind of school for moral self-education of the child, contributing to the development of their sense of humor and forming the foundations of emotional perception of the world.

The scholar also notes an important feature of this genre - its transformations due to children's age characteristics. The counting rhyme, according to her observation, precedes the child's mastery of collective forms of play, as it satisfies the natural need to accompany movement with rhythmically organized words. In this regard, nonsensical counting rhymes are organically integrated into the context of children's ornamental poetic improvisations.

G. S. Vinogradov, in turn, defined the upper limit of the active use of counting rhymes as the beginning of the youth period - approximately up to 15-16 years old, believing that with the disappearance of traditional children's collective games from adolescents' lives, the counting rhyme itself also disappears. However, this statement in modern conditions requires clarification: in recent decades, traditional collective games accompanied by counting rhymes are ending as early as the end of early adolescence (around 12-13 years old) and are losing their former significance. At the same time, a new trend is observed - the use of counting rhymes by adolescents and young people outside of game situations, where their divinatory and prognostic function, associated with elements of guessing and symbolic prediction, comes to the forefront.

Thus, the genre system of children's folklore represents a holistic pedagogical and artistic structure, in which aesthetic, cognitive, and moral principles are in organic unity. It not only serves as a means of transmitting cultural experience but also performs an important function of socialization and formation of the child's personality in the spirit of folk ideals.

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