

UZBEK AND ENGLISH FOLK LEGENDS: A STUDY OF THEIR CLASSIFICATION AND GENRE CHARACTERISTICS

Mirzayeva Salimakhon

*doctor of philological sciences, professor
Andijan state university*

Abdurashidova Kamolakhon Abdurasul qizi

ASU 2nd degree of doctoral student

Annotation. *Folk legends are a vital part of cultural heritage, encapsulating the values, beliefs and history of a people. This article examines the classification and genre features of Uzbek and English folk legends. Folk legends represent a genre that enables the conveyance of ancient historical and mythological events in a persuasive and imaginative form. The analysis reveals that Uzbek and English legends exhibit shared characteristics, including orality, anonymity and traditionality, which contribute to the formation of cultural identity.*

Key words: *In the world folklore, in the Uzbek folklore, in the genre of legends, in the mythological school, in the theoretical concepts, motive, typology, mythological legends.*

Folk legends represent an autonomous genre of folklore, distinguished by distinctive characteristics. Oral tradition, anonymity, variability, traditionality, and community play a pivotal role in these narratives. Legends are intimately connected to mythological elements, exhibiting a range of magical, sacred, and ritualistic themes. Legends offer invaluable insights into the worldview, values, and socio-historical context of the people. It is therefore essential to study the interrelationships between folk legends and mythology in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of cultural paradigms. The purpose of this article is to clarify the genre features and unique nature of folk legends, to examine the criteria for their taxonomic study, to consider differentiated classification issues, and to propose a new classification system.

Folk legends are a distinctive form of folklore that can be found in the traditions of various cultures around the world. They are characterised by a narrative structure that interweaves real events with imaginative elements, portraying historical occurrences alongside elements of fiction and fantasy. As an autonomous genre of folklore, they possess significant educational value.

The term "afsona" is derived from the Persian word "afsun," which refers to magic or charm. It signifies a narrative based on fictional constructs, as opposed to factual accounts. In Mahmud Kashgari's work, "Devon-u Lug'otit-Turk," the term is used as "sav," which serves to underscore its importance. The term "legenda," derived from Latin, is a synonym that denotes a text recommended for reading and is rooted in tales and narratives. One of the defining characteristics of legends is their close relationship with other genres of folklore. Such narratives frequently encompass elements of magic, enchantment, and miraculous occurrences, intertwining with other forms of folklore. A defining characteristic of legend

narratives is the juxtaposition of "wonderful objects" alongside real-life occurrences. Legends do not adhere to a fixed poetic form; they exhibit a strong narrative quality but lack the frequent use of similes or epithets. Moreover, they are unable to fully reflect the full intensity and complexity of modern realities. Consequently, theoretical perspectives posit that contemporary legends, narratives, and tales are not being created in present-day Uzbek folklore as a result of these constraints.

K. Imomov identifies ten genre characteristics of legends, which he then proceeds to elucidate in order to highlight their essential features.

- ✓ Imaginary Description: A defining feature of legends is their imaginative narrative style, which is employed to describe specific facts and mythological events.

- ✓ The act of eliciting trust is a fundamental aspect of the communication process.

- ✓ The events described in legends inspire confidence in both the listener and the storyteller.

- ✓ In terms of narrative form, legends are characterised by: Legends present events as stories from the past, with the intention of emphasising, explaining and conveying information.

- ✓ The interpretation of events is a key aspect of legend construction. The interpretation of events and occurrences is contingent upon the narrative style employed.

- ✓ The function of historical reference in legends is to: While legends are primarily concerned with conveying information about the past, their artistic quality is often limited, resulting in a partial emergence of aesthetic impact.

- ✓ The temporal setting of events is not specified; the historical facts and occurrences are situated in an ambiguous temporal framework, often directed towards a distant past.

The plot is concise, typically structured around one or two episodes or motifs. The use of personal narration is a defining feature of legends. Legends may be recounted by any individual who has heard or learned them, regardless of time or place, and are often associated with a particular object. The character system comprises three principal categories: the protagonist, the secondary character, and the antagonist. The character system typically comprises three types: the principal hero, a supporting character, and an antagonist. The depiction of characters is characterised by simplicity, concision and a tendency towards exaggeration. The genre is characterised by a lack of a fixed structure. This genre is not characterised by a fixed plot or composition, allowing for variability in storytelling. These characteristics collectively define the nature of legends, emphasising their imaginative, narrative-driven, and communal aspects. In light of the aforementioned observations, it can be posited that the storytelling style prevalent in folk legends, whereby a specific historical or mythological event is presented in a manner that is both believable and imaginative, constitutes one of the primary genre characteristics.

To illustrate, the transformation of mythological views about the wind is a pivotal theme in the legend "Rayhon va Shabada." The narrative discloses that Shabada is the eldest son of the wind lord, Shamol Baba, and it delineates his affection for a maiden who is afflicted by her stepmother's malevolence. As the narrative progresses, the girl undergoes a metamorphosis, becoming a basil plant (rayhon), while Shabada, who becomes part of the

flowers, is also affected by this transformation. The legend is predicated on the tenet that natural phenomena are imbued with animism, as exemplified by the girl's metamorphosis into a plant. The character of Shabada is presented as harmless, in contrast to the destructive nature of Shamol Bobo's other sons, Bo'ron, To'polon, Quyun, and To's, who are depicted as detrimental to vegetation. Such elements are illustrated through the use of mythological interpretations of real-life experiences. The presence of Shabada among the flowers and basil symbolises a natural occurrence, which can be explained by his love for the girl. The motif of unfulfilled love leading to transformation serves as an effective narrative device, enhancing the overall credibility of the story. In conclusion, the legend utilises mythological frameworks to convey a relatable human experience, merging the fantastical with the credible, thereby enhancing our cultural understanding of natural elements and emotions in Uzbek folklore.

In the context of folk legends, the conflict that drives the narrative often has a domestic meaning, with the resolution emerging through miraculous actions and divine intervention. A case in point is the legend of "Obshir Ota," recorded by B. Sarimsoqov in 1977. In this legend, the conflict is of a domestic nature, initiated by the incursion of foreign forces, which gives rise to tension between Prophet David and his daughters. The narrative revolves around the theme of prophetic miracles, with a particular focus on the etymology of the name "Obshir," which is derived from the legend that the waterfall emerges when the prophet strikes the mountain with his staff. The resolution of the conflict in this legend is achieved through the intervention of David, which serves to illustrate the critical role that divine intervention plays in addressing earthly challenges. This interaction between the human and the divine represents a common motif in folk legends, whereby conflicts rooted in everyday life are resolved through extraordinary means, thereby reinforcing cultural values and beliefs. In conclusion, the legend of "Obshir Ota" demonstrates how conflicts in folk narratives not only drive the narrative forward but also serve as a conduit for the conveyance of moral and spiritual lessons within the context of the community's worldview.

In folk legends, the presence of mythological characters, extraordinary individuals, prophets, saints, and historical figures serves to convey information, exert religious influence, and inspire belief. The principal protagonists are typically depicted as just and courageous, engaged in combat against chaotic forces and endowed with supernatural abilities. The character system encompasses not only the hero but also a multitude of supporting figures, including the xumo, wolf, swallow, and fairy, in addition to a plethora of antagonist characters, such as devs, dragons, and invaders. Antagonists are responsible for generating plot tension and conflict, while supporting characters facilitate the resolution and enhance the credibility of the information presented. In the legend "Ajdar Ko'zi," the protagonist is Ali (one of the Chahoryors), who faces the antagonist dragon and is supported by a girl in need and the village people. This legend exhibits a toponymic character, which can be observed in the naming of the lake and stones in the vicinity of the village of Bozgir, situated in close proximity to Zebak.

The narrative incorporates the motif of daily offerings presented to the dragon and the sacrifice of an individual, which serves to propel the conflict and generate plot tension.

Conversely, the motif of the girl's tears falling on Ali's face represents a pivotal moment in the resolution of the narrative. The conflict with the dragon serves to reinforce Ali's role as a saviour, while simultaneously emphasising his supernatural abilities and the compelling portrayal of the legend's reality. As the narrative progresses, Ali arrives at the lake, witnesses the girl being presented to the dragon, and engages in combat with the intention of rescuing her. The legend serves to reinforce the belief in the ongoing existence of dragons through the use of mythological motifs, including their supposed underwater habitat and the idea that their heads can grow back multiple times. In conclusion, "Ajdar Ko'zi" demonstrates how folk legends utilise mythological elements and characters to examine themes of heroism, conflict and cultural beliefs, creating a narrative that resonates with moral and spiritual significance.

A number of dictionaries offer insights into the etymology of English folk legends, noting that the Latin verb "legere" originally meant "to gather." With the passage of time, the meaning of the verb evolved to encompass the notions of "to see" and "to read," which in turn gave rise to the concept of "to read." The Latin term "legenda," derived from this verb, was employed in the Middle Ages to signify "something that should be read."

The term "legenda" was primarily used to refer to stories about the lives of saints. During the Middle Ages, a considerable corpus of such tales was produced, frequently combining factual elements with artistic storytelling. Consequently, upon entering the English language as "legend," the term "legenda" came to signify a narrative from the past that may or may not represent complete truth. This evolution demonstrates that English folk legends serve not only as historical accounts but also as vehicles for cultural values, beliefs, and artistic expression. They reflect the complexities of truth and fiction in storytelling, encapsulating the multifaceted nature of these narratives. The primary functions of English folk legends can be defined as follows: explanatory, communicative, and didactic. The explanatory function of folk legends is to provide an account of the causes and explanations of phenomena. Folk legends offer explanations for anomalous or extraordinary occurrences. They assist communities in comprehending their surrounding environment, addressing queries pertaining to the natural world, the phenomenon of life, and the unknown through the medium of imaginative storytelling. The communicative function of folk legends is to facilitate communication within and between communities. They are shared stories that foster cultural identity and cohesion, allowing people to connect over common beliefs, values, and experiences. The didactic function of folk legends is to serve an educational purpose, imparting moral lessons or cultural values. Through their narratives, they teach important life lessons and ethical guidelines, making them valuable tools for socialisation and education.

The classification of folk legends represents a pivotal area of inquiry within the field of world folklore studies. A number of scholars have made valuable contributions to the taxonomic research of folk legends, offering theoretical perspectives that have significantly influenced our understanding of this genre. Notable figures in this field include Edwin Sidney Hartland, Don Yoder, Richard Francis Fleck, Van Allen Tyson and Walter Robert Feldman. Furthermore, researchers such as B. Sarimsoqov, K. Imomov, U. Jumanazarov,

M. Murodov, S. Ro'zimboyev, M. Jo'rayev, M. Rahmonova, M. A. Rizoyev, and N. Q. Ro'ziyev have provided valuable insights into the classification criteria relevant to folk legends.

This study will examine the classification criteria established by these scholars and analyse their theoretical views on the genre of legends. By analysing these frameworks, we can gain a deeper understanding of how folk legends are categorised based on themes, narrative structures and cultural significance. This comparative approach will illuminate the complexities and richness of folk legends across different cultures, emphasising their role in preserving communal memory and identity. An understanding of the classification of folk legends not only enhances our knowledge of this literary form but also highlights its enduring relevance in contemporary cultural contexts.

A comparative analysis of the legend genre in Uzbek and English folklore reveals that the process of classification is inherently complex. This complexity can be attributed to a number of factors, including the diverse approaches to classification, the distinctive characteristics of the genre, and the considerable diversity in thematic content. It is therefore necessary to address the differentiations in the classification of the legend genre.

In order to facilitate the classification of Uzbek and English folk legends, we propose the following principles:

- ✓ In accordance with traditional plot motifs, the identification of recurrent themes and narrative structures is essential.
- ✓ In terms of the concept of creation, The differentiation between the origins of legends, with a particular focus on their folk or literary roots.
- ✓ In accordance with the thematic content: A critical examination of the subjects and messages conveyed within the legends.
- ✓ In relation to space and time, an examination of the influence of the setting and temporal context on the storytelling is proposed.

In the context of English folklore, the legend genre is classified according to its creation into two principal categories:

Folk legends are narratives that are rooted in popular culture and oral traditions. They are distinct from *literary legends*, which are stories that have been crafted or modified by writers and are often found in literature. As our research focuses on folk legends, we will delve into the classification of this genre, exploring its unique characteristics, themes, and narrative structures. This examination will enhance our understanding of how folk legends function within their cultural contexts, reflecting the values, beliefs, and experiences of the communities from which they originate.

In the field of Uzbek folklore studies, a variety of approaches to the classification of legends can be observed. The most prevalent approach to the classification of folk legends is based on the thematic content of the narratives. In his work, K. Imomov provides a comprehensive analysis of the classification of Uzbek folk legends. He also makes reference to the classifications of other scholars, such as V. Ye. Gusev categorises them into three distinct groups: religious, social-ideological, and historical. N. Khotamov and B. Sarimsoqov distinguish between four types: historical, toponymic, religious, and everyday.

U. Jumanazarov focuses on three categories: toponymic, historical, and religious. S. Qasqabasov identifies three groups: historical-toponymic, religious-scriptural, and social-ideological. Imomov offers a critical analysis of these classifications, identifying their strengths and weaknesses, and seeks to resolve the discrepancies in the classification of the legend genre.

In particular, K. Imomov initially categorises folk legends into three distinct types:

- ✓ Mythological Legends: Such legends have their origins in a variety of mythological frameworks, including etiological, eschatological, and cosmogonic myths, as well as animistic and totemistic beliefs.

- ✓ Toponymic Legends: These are legends that pertain to the names and origins of places.

- ✓ Historical Legends: The focus is on historical events or figures.

In his subsequent works, Imomov develops this classification further, proposing four internal types:

- ✓ Mythological Legends: Such narratives encompass accounts of deities, spirits, and associated etiological beliefs.

- ✓ Religious Legends: The focus is on religious narratives and figures.

- ✓ Toponymic Legends: The focus is on the etymology of geographical names.

- ✓ Historical Legends: The focus is on historical contexts and events.

By employing this classification system, Imomov makes a substantial contribution to our understanding of the diverse and intricate nature of Uzbek folk legends. He illuminates the complex interconnections between mythology, history, and cultural identity within this genre.

Category	Subcategories
I. Traditional Folk Legends	1. Mythological Legends - Explain natural phenomena and cultural beliefs through mythic narratives.
	2. Historical Legends - Focus on historical figures and events, conveying lessons and cultural memory.
	3. Toponymic Legends - Related to the origins of place names and their historical significance.
	4. Religious Legends - Centered around religious themes, figures, and moral lessons.
II. Modern/Urban Legends	- Reflect contemporary experiences and societal issues, incorporating elements of folklore while addressing modern realities.

A mythological legend is defined as a plot of a legend that describes a reality based on specific mythological characters, explains a phenomenon, or justifies the reasons for its origin. Mythological legends represent a particularly prevalent form of folklore in both Uzbek and English traditions. These narratives are firmly rooted in imaginary constructs about the world and the phenomena surrounding it.

By identifying the distinctive characteristics of these legends, it is possible to classify them into internal groups based on thematic criteria. Mythological legends can be further categorised into a number of distinct types, including:

- ✓ Primordial legends are those which concern the earliest known history of the world and its inhabitants. These legends address the genesis of the world and its constituent elements.

- ✓ Etiological legends are those which seek to explain the causes of specific phenomena or traditions. The objective is to elucidate the underlying causes of particular phenomena or traditions.

- ✓ Eschatological Legends These legends pertain to the end of the world or the ultimate destiny of humanity.

- ✓ Celestial Legends: These legends pertain to celestial phenomena and cosmic occurrences.

- ✓ Anthropogenetic legends are those which concern the origin and development of humanity. The discussion will address the origins of humanity and the characteristics that define us as a species.

- ✓ Zoonymic legends are those which concern the relationship between animals and humans. Relating to the genesis and attributes of animals.

- ✓ Phytonymic Legends: The focus of this field of study is the origin and significance of plants.

- ✓ Calendar Legends: These legends are related to seasonal changes and the agricultural calendar.

- ✓ Manistic Legends: The examination of the human relationship with the paranormal.

This classification provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the thematic diversity within mythological legends, highlighting their significant role in reflecting cultural values, beliefs, and the understanding of natural phenomena in both Uzbek and English folklore.

In conclusion, the insights presented regarding Uzbek and English folk legends demonstrate that both cultures employ legends as a genre that is firmly rooted in the imaginative representation of ancient historical or mythological realities. This genre characteristic reflects a shared foundation in the reliable narration of events, rooted in creativity and cultural context. In terms of their genre traits, styles of creation, and unique characteristics, Uzbek and English folk legends display notable similarities. Folk legends can be classified into two principal categories, traditional and modern, according to the scope of their themes, the manner of their expression, and their relationship to time and space.

Traditional legends can be further subdivided into the following categories: mythological, historical, toponymic, and religious. This classification serves to illustrate the complex nature of these narratives, while also emphasising their role in the preservation of cultural heritage and the comprehension of the values and beliefs espoused by both societies.

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