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NATURE-INSPIRED RELATIONSHIPS IN FOLKLORE DISCOURSE

The article provides a comprehensive analysis of nature-inspired relationships in folklore discourse, focusing on the cognitive-pragmatic and emotive-psychological dimensions of human attitudes toward nature. It explores how folklore texts, as some of the earliest forms of artistic and cultural expression, reflect the formation of human–nature relations within the framework of primordial consciousness. These texts not only document everyday experiences but also reveal how ancient communities perceived, interpreted, and symbolically structured their interaction with the natural environment. In this context, folklore serves as a repository of collective memory, preserving mythological thinking, belief systems, and culturally specific worldviews related to nature.

The study examines how nature-related beliefs, symbols, and mythological codes are articulated in folklore discourse through various narrative and linguistic forms. Particular attention is paid to cosmogonic concepts, which explain the origin and organization of the universe, and to the ways natural phenomena – such as lightning, rain, wind, mountains, water, and trees – are interpreted through mythological frameworks. In the absence of scientific knowledge, ancient people relied on myths and legends to explain these phenomena, attributing them to divine forces or supernatural entities. This mythopoetic approach demonstrates that nature was not only understood in physical terms but also perceived as a living, spiritual, and semiotic system.

Furthermore, the article highlights the strong connection between nature and the inner, spiritual world of human beings as reflected in folklore. Natural elements are frequently used as expressive tools through which individuals convey emotions, thoughts, and social experiences. In folk songs, proverbs, epics, and other folklore genres, motifs of nature symbolize human feelings such as joy, sorrow, love, hope, and despair. The analysis shows that elements of nature function as cognitive and semiotic models, representing various stages of human life, moral values, and social relationships. For example, mountains may symbolize strength and endurance, water represents life and continuity, while trees often embody growth and cosmic connection.

The research also emphasizes the role of paremiological units (proverbs and sayings) and epic texts, such as “The Book of Dede Gorgud,” in shaping and reflecting human–nature relations in Azerbaijani folklore. Through qualitative, cognitive-semantic, and semiotic analysis, the study demonstrates that nature-related metaphors play a crucial role in structuring human thought and communication. These metaphors encode ethnocultural knowledge and contribute to the transmission of values and beliefs across generations.

In conclusion, the article argues that folklore discourse reveals a deep and inseparable unity between humans and nature, where natural elements function not only as physical realities but also as symbolic and conceptual tools for understanding human existence. This perspective also reflects an implicit ecological consciousness, emphasizing harmony, balance, and respect for nature – ideas that remain highly relevant in the context of contemporary environmental challenges.

Keywords: folklore, discourse, nature, human, attitude.

Introduction. Myths, one of the oldest genres of folklore, are considered to be the primary sources of humanity’s original outlook. In mythological systems, theology of natural phenomena and objects is presented as gods and resident forces. For example, Abzu represents the original ocean of water, and Adad represents the typhoon and lighthouse. This approach shows that ancient people understood nature not only

physically, but also on a metaphysical level. Similarly, in ancient Egyptian mythology, Amun symbolizes the divine power of the sun, while Aker symbolizes the concept of the earth and the horizon. These parallels prove both general and specific features of nature images in mythologies of different peoples. [6, p. 46–62].

Literature review. In the folklore discourse of the Azerbaijani people, human-appeal relations are



multifaceted and multidisciplinary. Therefore, the folklore scientist Elchin Galiboglu wrote, “In our saga, the unity of man – nature – finds expression in adult stature. Koroghlu’s sword is a part of a thunderbolt, from horses into the valley. In Azerbaijani mughams, separately in the Azerbaijani love arts, the expression of Human – Nature unity is complete. Godly spirit and voice are clearly heard in our agreement. The art of Azerbaijani zurna-balaban, from the beginning to the end, makes Nature inquire: it conveys the extreme elegance and forbearance of a Turkish man with a harrowing, invincible, warlike, enthusiastic spirit [4, p. 35]. In Turkish ethnoculture, objects of different nature are often repositioned as cults. Nature objects of *mountain, forest, water, sea, river, ocean, valley, valley*, etc. have a semiotic essence in human cognition. With their presentation, different discourses express socio-psychological, emotional, and pragmatic functions. In Azerbaijani folklore, as well as in Azerbaijani folklore, the *mountain* has always been considered a symbol of exaltation, protection, holiness, and proximity to God. Azizkhan related to the Godverdi *mountain* cult, writing that the *mountain* names «In the Book» appear as one of the means of characterizing the hero characters. It is possible to approach such names from different prisms: the name of a mountain is typical of the language of only one hero, or it has been used only in relation to one hero; the name of a mountain is pronounced in the language of two heroes; the name of a mountain is found in the language of more than two heroes. Indeed, it is possible to clarify the associative and syntagmatic relation between mountain names and heroic characters on the basis of textual semantics” [5, p. 45]. There is a saying about the mountain: “The mountain does not meet the mountain, and man meets man” [1, p. 79]. In this paremiological unit, the example of the mountain refers to an aphoristic content based on human comparison with nature. The cognitive semantics of this paremia are metaphorically symbolized by social relations between people. That is, the cognitive nature of this proverb is that objects of nature are fixed in the pattern of the mountain, they cannot change their place, but rather, it is natural for people to encounter them at a certain time because their way of life is dynamic. In short, this paremia promotes the concept of human being as a social being and refers to the existence of social bonds between people at all times. It is known that ancestors originate as a linguistic expression of people’s life experiences, life skills, and many years of experience.

In artistic discourse, the *mountain* at some point refers to “sorrow, grief,” depending on the context.

There is a mountain boy expression in our language. The other name of this idiom is in the form of an ancestor. “The mountain is painted deep” [2, p. 234]; you look at the *mountain – it snows, you look at the garden – it barks* [2, p. 235]; you come from the *mountain, you go to the mountain* [2, p. 234]; the *mountains do not lie* [2, p. 234]; you take the staff from the *mountain and say, “It’s too much”*, and you see that the *mountain itself does not exist* [2, p. 234]; the *head of the mountain can become fog* [2, p. 232]; the *place of the mountain* [2, p. 232]; the *place of the fog* [2, p. 232]; the *mountain is ours, the gazelle is ours, what is the hunter here looking for?* [2, p. 232]; *To the right of Mount Ara, it is snowy and snowless* [1, p. 35]. In general, parems about nature convey ethnocultural information that expresses the attitude of each nation to nature from generations to generations.

Methods. This study adopts a qualitative and interpretative approach based on folklore analysis. The methodology includes:

- Textual Analysis of Azerbaijani folklore sources, including proverbs (paremiological units) and epic texts such as “*The Book of Dede Gorgud*”
- Cognitive Semantic Analysis to interpret metaphorical meanings of natural elements
- Semiotic Analysis to examine symbolic representations of nature
- Comparative Perspective to identify parallels between mythological and folkloric systems
- The data consist of selected proverbs, idioms, and epic narratives that reflect human–nature relations.

Elchin Galiboglu wrote, “Consistently examining the human-Enlightenment relationship in folklore, which finds its rich expression in Azerbaijani folklore, can be considered a must for tomorrow. An analysis of the patterns in numerous folklore patterns inevitably leads to a divine – and human – approach to nature. The consequences arising from the disturbance of ecological balance in the world today are of undeniable relevance to the subject in question at a time when every one of us is living in reality” [4, p. 239].

Here are some examples: *Mountains I trust in you, snowed in* [1, p. 208]. This proverb expresses a direct nature-inspired attitude. This is where the *mountain* symbolizes a confident person at all times, and the *phrase snowflakes* means that the person you trust is out. “*Thirsty fruit does not bear fruit*” [1, p. 590]. In this paremia, the expression *thirsty fruit* symbolizes a useless, inactive person, and the expression *unobtrusive* refers to the consequence of inactive person’s work. In this paremia, the concept of water metaphors hard work, perseverance, and activity.

In the Azerbaijani language, there is a proverb: “The *stranger builds the bird’s nest with his God*” [1, p. 163]. The cognitive semantics of this proverb suggest that the metaphorically immature or alienated person is rewarded by God for his sustenance. That is, a stranger’s bird symbolizes a helpless person, a nesting house, a place to live. In short, the bird and nest metaphors in this parable, in fact, describe human life. Thus, the process of building a nest of birds that are a part of nature in these ancestors metaphorically denotes the concept of human protection by the divine. It is known that variation in ancestry is observed. For example, the other variant of paremia, where the *bear crawls through the forest and does not know* the forest, is: the *sparrow crawls through the mountain and does not know* the mountain [1, p. 209]. Here, *sparrows* and *bears* are characterized as language metaphors, and forests and mountains are characterized by people trusted by nature images. Thus, the idea of rational understanding of nature and human relations is expressed in both parems.

“*The nest built by every bird is lovely if it is from a golden cage*” [1, p. 166]. These ancestral phrases *golden cage* and *bird’s nest* create a semiotic opposition. Thus, the expression *golden cage* metaphorically symbolizes the restriction of freedom, freedom, happiness, while the *nest built by each bird* symbolizes freedom. That is, this paremiological unit metaphorically reflects the analogy of human life with nature, according to its cognitive semantics. Let’s look at another example: “*the bird is a golden cage dungeon*” [1, p. 176]. In this paremia, which refers to the Azerbaijani language, the bird metaphorically refers to the association of “fly”. Cognitively, the bird associates freedom, liberty, in that paremia, and the *cage* lesson refers to the concept of restriction, restriction, suppression of freedom. As the examples show, the concepts related to nature in paremiological discourse reflect the socio-psychological aspects of human society through conceptual metaphors.

Results. The analysis reveals that natural elements in Azerbaijani folklore function as **cognitive and symbolic models** of human life and social relations.

In the Azerbaijani phocloric discourse, different models of nature metaphorically address different situations of human life and socio-psychological relations. For example, we have a proverb: “The cell *throws the fruit into the tree*” [1, p. 206]. The cognitive semantics of this proverb refers to the fact that the phrase *fruitful tree* symbolizes a person who is well-known, famous, sufficiently influential in society, and the phrase *throwing* a flood means what they say here. That is, the cognitive explanation for this paremia is

that in society, there may be a great deal of people who look enviously at a skilled person in socium with a keen sense of direction.

There is a verbalization of the concept of «water» in paremiological discourse. “*Where the water is, the vitality is there* [1, p. 588]; the *fish separated from the water has no fear of fire* [2, p. 588]; it prints *like a fish out of water* [2, p. 589]; there is *no duck in the thirsty land, no goose*” [2, p. 589]. There are many sayings about the *tree* concept: “*the sparrow tree is as high as it is, the original is missing, the branch does not have a bar* [2, p. 572]; the *tree that grows in the shade does not have a fruit* [2, p. 442]. There are also parems related to the seasons that represent nature: “*Sleeping in the spring, uprooting in the winter* [2, p. 386]; the *rain of the summer day, the rejuvenation of the winter day*” [2, p. 387], the *winter is gone, the spring is coming, the bean is planting* [2, p. 206], the *winter is in the distance, the summer is in the mountains* [2, p. 207], the *winter is in the garden skirt, the mountain skirt in the summer* [2, p. 206]. At the same time, various natural phenomena are reflected in paremiological discourse: we came out of the *rain, we fell into the rain* [2, p. 383]; the *rain soaked, the day dried* [2, p. 383], the *rain took the rest out of the rain* [2, p. 383], the *shade of a large tree would be great*” [2, p. 147].

A man who is born one day will return to earth one day. The cognitive semantics of this phrase, which carries a deep philosophical understanding, reveal the deep philosophical essence of the concept “Soil”. “The Book of Dede Gorgud” also reads:

“*Comfy, goofy world,
The end is the dying world,
He got a quote, hid the place,
To whom did the world live?»* [3, p. 43].

The phrase *hid the place* in this piece of court is the notion that life is temporary, that mourning is not eternal.

There is also water among the four objects in the saga “Kitabi-Dada Gorgud”, in the painting “Oiling of the house of Qazan Khan”, where Qazan Khan surveyed the abode of Qazan Khan. The conversation between Uruz and the tree is described. It is mentioned in part that the water has seen the face of the god. That is, water is presented here as *a symbol of life and creation*: “*A water has appeared in front of the pot. He said, “Water has seen the face of God. I shall be inquiring about this water.” Let’s see, lady, how it went. The pot said:*

“*The water coming out of the boiling rocks!
Water hitting wood vessels!
Hussein’s dedicated water with Hasan!*”

The adultery of the bean with the garden is water!
Ayisha and Fatima's vision of water!
The water that the princess horses drink!
The water that the golden camels pass by!"
[3, p. 142–143].

In this survey, the water is presented as one of the main elements of nature and illustrates the symbolic nature of living with man in the example of Qazan Khan. In this piece, what is not related to the water in the speech of the khan of Qazan is important for the presentation of water as a living being, a part of nature as a whole. In this section, the semiotic aspects of nature-inspired relationships are summarized. In the saga, the conversation of Qazan Khan's son Uruz with the tree of booty is one that has a special symbolic meaning. *"The unbelievers seized Uruz and brought him to the bottom of the spoils. Uruz said, "Those who disbelieve, amen, there is no doubt about the union of god! Let me speak to this tree." Called to the tree, she said to the lady, what she said:*

You say, "Tree!, Tree! If I say don't hesitate, tree!
Tree at the gateway to Mecca!
Museyi – The base of the kernel is the tree!
Big – big water bridge tree!
The huge ship of the giant sea is a tree!
Hand Towel's saddle tree!
Tree supported by the sword of your hand!"
[3, p. 146].

In the above text, Uruz's conversation with the tree, due to cognitive thinking, refers to his belief in nature and nature's protective mission in the example of the tree. That is, semiotically, in this poetic piece, a person's feelings of seeking help and help from nature. There are both mythological and symbolic understandings in this conversation. Thus, in mythology, the tree reflects the symbolism of the world and acts as the main symbol of life. Here, in the tree's pattern, nature objects are shaped like a life preserving image. It is named after the World Tree in Nordic and Turkish mythologies. In Turkish mythology, this concept is referred to by the expression Tree of Life. According to the myth of the world tree, the world stands on a tree, the cosmic tree symbolizes the relationship between the earth and the sky and the communication. That is, because the tree is symbolic, the universe is constructed in the form of a tree.

Discussion. The results demonstrate that folklore discourse reflects a deep integration of human cognition, emotion, and environment. Natural elements are not merely descriptive but function as symbolic tools for expressing complex human experiences.

These findings align with cognitive and semiotic theories suggesting that metaphor is fundamental to human thought. Nature serves as a conceptual framework through which social relations, emotions, and moral values are understood.

Additionally, the study highlights the ecological consciousness embedded in folklore. Ancient narratives reflect respect for nature and awareness of balance between humans and the environment. This perspective is particularly relevant today in the context of global ecological challenges.

There are many examples of naturalistic relations in the Azerbaijani folklore discourse. "The Book of Dede Gorgud" contains rich symbols and phrases expressing the ecological thoughts of the ancient Turks. *"There is a scene in the Bukhara boy, the lady's son: When the boy fell down there, the Grey Horseman was ready next to the boy. Three times he met his wound and said, "My son, do not fear; for there is no death that creates you. Mountain flower and mother's milk are your ointment."* [3, p. 137] The saga reads as follows:

*"Be my black head sacrificed, son, to you...
Why you run, your waters, the mountain of gas,
Don't let it flow unless it's stupid!
Why finish your herbs, Mount Gas,
If it doesn't end, don't let it end!
Miss you Keyes, Goose Mountain!"* [3, p. 137].
"The rock is behind the mountain [2, p. 174], *the rock does not fly*, the valley is not full [2, p. 174], *the rock is behind the mountain* [2, p. 174], *the rock breaks the dust* when it flies [2, p. 168], *one winter of the homeland is better than a hundred baht of pride* [2, p. 168], *and the dune of the great mountain is also great*" [2, p. 148].

Conclusion. There have been many works in folklore and written literature that relate to human – nature relations. In artistic texts, at the paremiological level, nature-inspired relations are given from different semantics, different semiotic-imbolic ones. In antique Greek linguistics, concepts of nature's relation to language were still introduced. One of these concepts was fuse theory. Proponents of the Füsey theory argued that all names come from nature, the source of which is nature. They first showed that language was based on natural laws.

In folklore discourse, natural phenomena metaphorize the social relations and communicative aspects of human life. For example, *"The wind will not return"* [2, p. 271]. Thus, the concept of balanced existence of nature and man, love towards nature, glorification of nature are reflected in folklore discourse.

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Мусаєва Н. А. ВЗАЄМОЗВ'ЯЗКИ, НАТХНЕННІ ПРИРОДОЮ, У ФОЛЬКЛОРНОМУ ДИСКУРСІ

У статті подано всебічний аналіз взаємин людини і природи в фольклорному дискурсі з акцентом на когнітивно-прагматичних та емоційно-психологічних аспектах ставлення людини до природи. Досліджується, як фольклорні тексти, будучи одними з найдавніших форм художнього й культурного мислення, відображають формування взаємин «людина – природа» в межах первісної свідомості. Ці тексти не лише фіксують повсякденний досвід, а й розкривають способи, якими давні спільноти сприймали, інтерпретували та символічно осмислювали природне середовище. У цьому контексті фольклор постає як носій колективної пам'яті, що зберігає міфологічне мислення, вірування та культурно зумовлені картини світу, пов'язані з природою.

У дослідженні розглянуто, як природоцентричні уявлення, символи та міфологічні коди репрезентуються у фольклорному дискурсі через різні наративні й мовні форми. Особлива увага приділяється космогонічним концепціям, які пояснюють походження та будову Всесвіту, а також інтерпретації природних явищ – блискавки, дощу, вітру, гір, води, дерев – у межах міфологічних моделей. За відсутності наукових знань давні люди пояснювали ці явища за допомогою міфів і легенд, наділяючи їх божественними або надприродними властивостями. Такий міфопоетичний підхід свідчить про те, що природа осмислювалася не лише фізично, а й як жива, духовна та семіотична система.

Крім того, у статті підкреслюється тісний зв'язок природи з внутрішнім духовним світом людини, відображений у фольклорі. Природні елементи часто виступають засобами вираження, через які людина передає свої почуття, думки та соціальний досвід. У народних піснях, прислів'ях, епосах та інших жанрах фольклору природні мотиви символізують людські емоції – радість, смуток, любов, надію та відчай. Аналіз показує, що елементи природи виконують функцію когнітивних і семіотичних моделей, репрезентуючи різні етапи людського життя, моральні цінності та соціальні відносини. Наприклад, гори можуть символізувати силу й стійкість, вода – життя та безперервність, а дерево часто уособлює зростання і космічний зв'язок.

Дослідження також акцентує увагу на ролі пареміологічних одиниць (прислів'їв і приказок) та епічних текстів, зокрема «Книги Деде Горгуда», у формуванні та відображенні взаємин людини і природи в азербайджанському фольклорі. За допомогою якісного, когнітивно-семантичного та семіотичного аналізу доведено, що природні метафори відіграють важливу роль у структуруванні людського мислення та комунікації. Вони кодують етнокультурні знання та сприяють передачі цінностей і вірувань між поколіннями.

У висновку стверджується, що фольклорний дискурс розкриває глибоку й нерозривну єдність людини і природи, де природні елементи виступають не лише як фізична реальність, а й як символічні та концептуальні засоби осмислення людського буття. Такий підхід також відображає приховану екологічну свідомість, підкреслюючи гармонію, баланс і повагу до природи – ідеї, що залишаються надзвичайно актуальними в умовах сучасних екологічних викликів.

Ключові слова: фольклор, дискурс, природа, людина, ставлення.

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