



INTERPRETATION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY AND ETHNOCULTURAL VALUES IN THE LEXICON OF FOLK EPICS

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Abstract: *The article analyzes the ethnocultural representation of material and spiritual values in the language of folk epics. It examines the role of lexical units denoting clothing, food, household items, as well as the concepts of honor, dignity, and loyalty, in reflecting national mentality and the worldview of the people.*

Keywords: *folk epics, ethnoculture, material culture, spiritual values, ethnocultural vocabulary, national mentality, national identity, dignity, loyalty.*

Annotatsiya. *Maqolada xalq dostonlari tilida moddiy va ma'naviy qadriyatlarning etnomadaniy ifodasi tahlil qilinadi. Kiyim-kechak, oziq-ovqat, uy-ro'zg'or buyumlari hamda or, nomus, sadoqat kabi birliklarning milliy mentalitet va xalq dunyoqarashini aks ettirishdagi o'rni yoritiladi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *xalq dostonlari, etnomadaniyat, moddiy madaniyat, ma'naviy qadriyat, etnomadaniy leksika, milliy mentalitet, milliy identitet, or, nomus, sadoqat.*

Аннотация. *В статье анализируется этнокультурное выражение материальных и духовных ценностей в языке народных эпосов. Раскрывается роль лексических единиц, обозначающих одежду, продукты питания, предметы домашнего обихода, а также понятия честь, достоинство, верность, в отражении национального менталитета и мировоззрения народа.*

Ключевые слова: *народные эпосы, этнокультура, материальная культура, духовные ценности, этнокультурная лексика, национальный менталитет, национальная идентичность, честь, достоинство, верность.*

In today's era of globalization, preserving national values is more important than ever. Language is the fundamental marker that defines the identity of a nation. The lexicon related to material culture within a language is a

powerful means of preserving the historical memory of a nation.

If such words are not studied separately, they may gradually fall out of active use and even become forgotten. For example, words such as *chakmon* and *sandiq*, which were widely used in the



past, are not frequently used in modern everyday life. However, epics have preserved these words. Therefore, by studying them, we can reconstruct the historical layers of the national language and introduce younger generations to this rich heritage.

In addition, national clothing and food become symbols and national brands of a people. For example, *palov* is now recognized as a national dish of Uzbekistan, and its roots are also depicted in folk epics. Thus, studying the vocabulary of material culture in epics is not only a scholarly necessity but also a means of preserving and promoting the national brand.

Some words related to material culture found in epics have become obsolete in the modern language, while others remain actively used. For example, words such as *yaktak*, *chakmon*, and *sandiq* belong to the archaic layer, whereas words such as *palov*, *do'ppi*, *belbog'*, and *gilam* are still actively used today. Therefore, studying such vocabulary enables us to observe the historical dynamics of the language, the lifespan of words, and semantic changes. This is particularly important for linguistics because it reveals the semantic development of words and their role in social life. It also makes it possible to scientifically determine how language develops, which lexical layers remain stable, and which are on the verge of disappearing.

The vocabulary of material culture in epics provides valuable information when

compared with the epics of other Turkic peoples. For example, the words *to'n*, *salla*, *do'ppi*, and *palov* found in Uzbek epics also occur in Kazakh, Karakalpak, Kyrgyz, and Uyghur epics. This helps reveal the ancient roots of common Turkic lexical units.

Through such comparative studies, we can identify common Turkic features and differences, as well as cultural contacts among Turkic peoples. Scientific studies have been conducted on the ethnic characteristics and lexical systems of such Turkic peoples as the Kuban peoples [1], Bashkirs [2], Tatars [3], Buryats [4], Karachay-Balkars [5], Chuvash [6], Mari [7], Udmurt [1], and others, as well as on the representation of their vocabulary in dictionaries. In Turkological studies, a special dictionary of ethnographic terms of the Azerbaijani language has been compiled [6], while Kazakh linguistics has also made significant contributions in this field [7]. Thus, the study of words related to material culture found in epics sheds light not only on the national history but also on the common cultural history of the people.

The above-mentioned evidence demonstrates the necessity of studying vocabulary related to clothing, food, rituals, and household objects found in epics as an independent scholarly problem. This is because:

- This vocabulary reveals the interaction between language and material culture.
- It sheds light on the social stratification of the people.



- It contributes to reconstructing the linguistic representation of customs and rituals.

- It is important for preserving national identity in the context of globalization.

- It makes it possible to observe language development.

- It provides valuable material for comparative studies.

Thus, an in-depth analysis of the vocabulary of material culture in epics makes it possible to scientifically understand the historical memory, social life, and national culture of the people. Therefore, studying this issue as an independent scholarly area is not only necessary but also highly relevant.

Folk epics vividly express not only the material life of the people but also their spiritual and moral world. In this process, concepts such as “*or*,” “*nomus*,” and “*sadoqat*” occupy a special place. These are fundamental categories of national consciousness and mentality, and in epics they determine the behavior, social relationships, and moral positions of heroes. In proverbs, sayings, and idiomatic expressions of oral folk literature, these concepts are expressed in an even more categorical and generalized form. The main purpose of this section is to reveal the source value of these units found in epics for studying national thought, moral values, and the spiritual mentality of the people.

Language is the most important factor that preserves and transmits the spiritual world of a people. In particular,

units related to moral values function as extremely important criteria in the social life of a people. In epics, the word “*or*” is associated with the hero's personal dignity, self-respect, and conscience. “*Nomus*” denotes responsibility before society, family honor, and the social reputation of men and women. “*Sadoqat*” expresses loyalty to love, friends, and homeland. In epics, these concepts serve as the main criteria in the decision-making of heroes. For example, *Alpomish* fights for his honor, while the loyalty of *Barchinoy* creates the image of a faithful woman.

The word “*or*” appears in epics as a personal virtue of the hero. If a hero is considered “*orsiz*” (dishonorable), he is not accepted by society. Therefore, since ancient times, “*or*” has been regarded in the national mentality as one of the fundamental criteria of a person. Thus, “*or*” is viewed in national thought as the foundation of humaneness. From a linguistic perspective, the use of the word “*or*” in epics is an important source for reconstructing the moral and psychological worldview of the people.

The concept of “*nomus*” in epics is more closely associated with social image and reputation before the community. A hero's courage or weakness, as well as his ability or inability to protect family honor, is measured by his “*nomus*.” This concept is also strictly evaluated by society in proverbs and idiomatic expressions. Thus, “*nomus*” is a norm regulating social relations in the people's worldview. Its study is necessary for revealing how family values and the honor of men and



women were evaluated in the national consciousness.

The concept of “*sadoqat*” is mainly associated with love and faithfulness. Epics extensively portray the loyalty of female heroes to men and the devotion of male heroes to their homeland. For example, Barchinoy's loyalty to Alpomish and Go‘ro‘g‘li's devotion to his people are interpreted as expressions of the people's ideal.

In proverbs, loyalty is also presented as the highest value of friendship and love: proverbs conveying the meanings of “*Loyalty is the test of friendship*” and “*A faithless beloved is like a house without a lamp*” constitute an important part of our national values. Studying this concept reveals one of the most stable elements among the moral values of the people—faithfulness and devotion.

Proverbs, sayings, and idiomatic expressions are concise and succinct products of the people's thought. In epics, they are reinforced through distinctive figurative expressions and embody the general moral views of the people.

Such units reveal the hierarchy of values in the people's thought: first comes *or*, followed by *nomus*, and then *sadoqat*. In linguistics, this phenomenon makes it possible to analyze the mentality of the people on the basis of the lexical-semantic system.

The necessity of studying these units can be explained by several reasons:

a) Ethnolinguistic reason: they constitute essential material for

reconstructing the moral worldview of the people.

b) Sociocultural reason: the concepts of “*or*,” “*nomus*,” and “*sadoqat*” are normative categories that regulate social relations.

c) Psychological reason: they shape moral ideals in individual and collective consciousness.

d) Linguistic reason: these words make it possible to study the value system of the people from a lexical-semantic perspective.

Concepts such as “*or*,” “*nomus*,” and “*sadoqat*” found in folk epics are among the most important sources for understanding national mentality. They not only determine the behavior of heroes but also express the moral worldview of the people, the norms governing their social relations, and their individual and collective values.

Proverbs, sayings, and idiomatic expressions further generalize these concepts and demonstrate their firmly established place in the people's thought. Thus, studying the vocabulary expressing moral values in epics is a relevant scholarly task for understanding the people's mentality, reconstructing national identity, and interpreting their spiritual heritage on a scientific basis.

Folk epics have been transmitted orally from generation to generation for centuries. Therefore, they constitute an invaluable source for conveying the historical memory, sociocultural values, and worldview of the people from one generation to another. Ancient words,



expressions, symbols, and images preserved in the language of epics serve not only artistic and aesthetic purposes but also actively function as linguistic means of preserving and transmitting the

ethnocultural identity of the people. For this reason, an ethnolinguocultural analysis of folk epics is a scholarly necessity.

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