ETHIOPIAN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

eISSN: 2349-5715 pISSN: 2349-5707

Volume: 12, Issue 04, April-2025 SJIF 2019: 4.702 2020: 4.737 2021: 5.071 2022: 4.919 2023: 6.980 2024: 7,662

SEMANTIC INTERPRETATION OF UZBEK FOLK PROVERBS WITH ZOONYM COMPONENTS

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Annotation: This article explores the zoonym lexemes used in Uzbek folk proverbs and the imagery created through them, analyzed from a linguoculturological and semantic perspective. It explains the meanings conveyed by names of domestic and wild animals in oral folk creativity, and how they reflect people's behavior, character traits, and attitudes toward social life, all grounded in scientific analysis.
Keywords:zoonym, proverb, figurative meaning, semantics, folk creativity, animal imagery.

Folk proverbs reflect the thinking, spiritual world, and worldview of a nation, embodying numerous images related to natural phenomena and the animal world. One significant group among these is zoonymic imagery, which consists of semantic units based on the names of animals. In linguistics, zoonymic units are interesting not only as nominative labels but also for their semantic load. Particularly in proverbs, they take on figurative, symbolic meanings, often linked to human character, social status, and moral standards.

1. Zoonymic Images Based on Domestic Animals

Names of domestic animals such as horse, donkey, goat, sheep, camel, cat, and rabbit appear in folk proverbs not merely as references to real creatures but also as metaphors for human character and conditions.

- **Horse** – a symbol of hard work, endurance, and loyalty:
  "A horse shows its worth on a journey; a stranger, during hardship,"
  "The horse finds it, the donkey eats it."
- **Donkey** – portrays a hardworking but simple-minded figure:
  "Knowing the donkey's nature, The only One hadn't gifted it horns,"
  "The donkey muddies the spring and then drinks from it."
- **Goat** – symbolizes restlessness, playfulness, and energy:
  "Even if a goat gives birth to twins, it won't surpass a sheep,"
  "Beware of a goat that has seen the market."
- **Sheep** – represents meekness, obedience, and loyalty:
  "Meeker than a guest sheep,"
  "Let the butcher slaughter your sheep."
- **Camel** – symbolizes endurance, strength, but also sluggishness:
  "The nor (camel) carries heavy loads,"
  "The bigger the camel, the deeper the wound."
- **Cat** – a symbol of cunning and secrecy:
  "A cat doesn't bask in the sun for no reason,"
  "Death to the mouse is sport to the cat."

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- **Rabbit** – characterized by agility and cowardice:
  "The rabbit fears its own shadow,"
  "The rabbit calls its child brave."

2. Images Based on Wild Animals

Images of wild animals often symbolize ferocity, bravery, danger, and cunning.

- **Wolf** – symbolizes predation, greed, and cruelty:
  "A wolf's eye is never satisfied,"
  "Don't raise a wolf's cub – it will still grow into a wolf."
- **Bear** – represents strength but also clumsiness:
  "A bear trusts its strength; a person, their heart,"
  "Even a bear can be tamed with a stick."
- **Elephant** – embodies grandeur and majesty:
  "An elephant's wound is still elephant-sized,"
  "Even after death, an elephant's tusks remain."
- **Lion** – symbolizes bravery, courage, and leadership:
  "The lion's cub becomes a lion,"
  "When the lion roars, the wild boar perishes."
- **Fox** – a symbol of cunning and trickery:
  "The fox has a thousand and one tricks,"
  "A fox will never become a lion."
- **Tiger** – represents bravery, pride, and strength:
  "He who fears the tiger won't enter the forest,"
  "A dog is a tiger in its own den."
- **Wild Boar** – associated with filth and aggression:
  "Beware a hungry boar,"
  "A donkey's labor, a boar's bite."

3. Aquatic Animals and Reptiles

- **Fish** – symbolizes connection to water and life source:
  "A fish seeks deep water; a man seeks a good place."
- **Frog** – connected to marshes and noise:
  "The frog's life is tied to the swamp,"
  "The frog croaks in the pond."
- **Snake** – symbolizes danger, venom, and deceit:
  "A snake does not step on another snake's tail,"
  "Only a snake understands another snake's language."

Zoonymic images are widely used in Uzbek folk proverbs to express human behavior, social roles, virtues, and flaws. Domestic animals mostly symbolize labor, loyalty, and gentleness, while wild animals represent courage, strength, or threats, deceit, and danger. This deeply reflects the Uzbek people's socio-psychological and cultural relationship with the animal world