Repetition in the structure of Tatar fairytale texts (The device of stringing in chain-type structures)

Fanzilya Khakimovna Zavgarova, Alsu Damirovna Battalova, Aliya Fanilovna Mukhammatgalieva

Kazan (Volga) Federal University, Kremlevskaya str., 18, Kazan, 420008, Russia

Abstract. The paper focuses on the analysis of the literary device of repetition, in particular its type called stringing, which manifests itself in a remarkable way in chain-type structures of Tatar fairytale texts. The research subject is meaningful units (links) of a folklore fairytale text and consistent connections between them, which perform the function of organizing a speech act. The paper contains analysis of a considerable body of Tatar fairytales, in which the device of stringing manifests itself in a specific way, besides, an attempt to describe varieties of this type of repetition with consideration of different levels of text research has been made.

Introduction

Studying a folklore text as a phenomenon of people's aesthetic art has a long-standing research tradition, which is rooted in understanding the language of a literary work as a notion with complex genesis [1, 2, 3, 4]. Furthermore, due to its accumulative ability, this system reflects the traces of its own stage changes and phases of collective aesthetic "polishing". It is a blend of linguistically heterogeneous elements that constitutes the heterogeneous nature of the folklore text language. Folklore speech has developed a whole system of devices which help the so called operative memory to hold the pronounced segments of the text in a percipient's consciousness and actualize the elements that are involved in various inter-text connections as the text plot is evolving. One of such devices generated in the depth of oral speech is the device of repetition.

Repetition is one of the most common literary devices in the folklore tradition. It occurs in texts of different genres and naturally performs heterogeneous functions. Repetition as a device of structuring folklore art works is well-examined both in foreign and Russian folklore studies. Many scholars approached the issue of detecting repetition in folklore texts: N.M. Vedernikova interpreted cumulativeness as a particular form of composition which constitutes "consecutive chain compound of plot elements" [5, 213]; V.Y. Propp argues that "cumulative fairytales are constructed not only on the chain principle, but also on the most diverse forms of attaching, accumulating, or building-up, which ends in some kind of a fun catastrophe» [6, 241]; A. Kretov made an attempt to define cumulative fairytales and separating them from similar structures, using mathematical models [7, 38]; Y.M. Meletinsky, targeted structural-typological specifics of a fairytale and granted repetition with a particular status in forming a narrative text [8, 134-166]; L.G. Nevskaya considers repetition to be an integral part of any folklore text [9, 210-215]; S.M.Loyter approaches repetition from the angle of genre specifics [10, 183-195]; I.F. Amroyan conducts structural and content-related analysis, which she uses to prove that the notion "chain-type structure" is wider and class-related, while "cumulation" is narrower and type-related [11, 137-243].

Attempts to evaluate the problem of repetition in a folklore text were made in Tatar folklore studies of the late 20th century. However, it can't be claimed that it has become an object of advanced research, although there are publication of such folklore scholars, as F. Urmancheyev [12], F. Akhmetova-Urmanche [13], M. Bakirov [14], K. Minnullin [15], where some tendencies of this research issue development are mentioned.

The paper takes into consideration approaches to the phenomenon of repetition in folklore proposed by representatives of different folklore studies schools and movements (L. Kredi [16], V.Y. Propp [6], A.A. Kretov [7], L.G. Nevskaya [9], I.F. Amroyan [11], S.M. Loyter [10]).

Methodology. The research methodology is based on the principles of systematic-comprehensive analysis of a folklore text's artistic structure; that is when elements of structural, comparative-typological, and hermeneutic research methods are combined.

Body of the paper

Texts of oral tradition, as opposed to spontaneous speech, have certain well-organized structure. Researching a text implies breaking it

down into meaningful units and then establishing consistent connections between them, which brings us to indicating a specific text unit called a *link* (the term introduced by I.F. Amroyan). "A link is a semantically integral segment of text, structured in a certain way and often functioning as a relatively stable syntactic construction» [11, 178]. The origin of a link is rooted in repetition that takes place at two levels: word-text and structural-compositional.

Repetition at the word-text level is a stereotype in the context of each specific work of literature and it is called a *reprise*. When a link structure is considered in terms of the content, three main elements are distinguished in it: a subject, an action performed by the subject, and an object which it targets, or a circumstantial element (locus).

In this paper we focus on the literary device called *stringing*, which, in turn, forms chain-type structures. Here we analyze Tatar fairytale texts, in which the given device manifests itself in a specific way, and make an attempt to describe varieties of this type of repetition with consideration of different levels of text research.

Stringing is such type of repetition when each following link is attached to the preceding one and consistently duplicates two out of three of its main elements, thereby forming a pivot by means of which the links are interconnected and constitute a chain; besides, relations of succession are established between the links.

Taking into account the content-related aspect of the given type of structure-forming repetition, two types of stringing – linear and emphasizing – are distinguished, where the latter may be developed according to the principle of ascending or descending.

Linear stringing, that is when the chain links are equivalent in their significance in regard to the action progress, functions to form chain-type structure of a variety of Tatar fairytales with the plot A 212 ("Batir atach" ("The Brave Rooster")), A 311 ("Ayu belen och kiz" ("The bear and Three Girls")), AT 20 C+130 A ("Pesey" ("The Cat")), AA 154 ("Ayu, babay, tolke" ("The Bear, the Old Man, and the Fox")), A 450 ("Senglisi kegi bulgan" ("The Goatling-Sister")), AT 313 C ("Chumech" ("A Scoop")), AT 550 + AT 301 ("Tanbatyr" ("Tanbatyr")). The device of linear stringing emphasizes the underlying idea of the fairytale: inevitability of a retribution for a committed misdeed (the didactic function), and it also contributes to building-up the atmosphere of heart-pounding expectation of a dramatic outcome (the aesthetic function).

If the main link in the stringing chain, for which the whole chain was built up, is the latter one (it either completes the literary work, resolving the plot conflict, or becomes the centre around which the fairytale story continues evolving), this device is called emphasizing stringing.

The device of emphasizing stringing in ascending order is used in texts of Tatar folk fairytales, in addition, it often occurs in fairytales where the main characters are helper-animals (AT 567 + AT 303 ("Ike tugan" ("Two Brothers")), AT 433 B + AT 400 = AA 400 A + AT 313 ("Gilanchai" ("The Serpent")). In regard to further development of the story plot, the last link of the chain is important in such fairytales, because its character performs an action, the result of which is in the focus of the following episode of the fairytale.

The device of emphasizing stringing in descending order is used in the texts of fairytales with the plots A 301 + A 321 ("Och dus" ("Three Friends")), AT 530 = AA 530 A + (AT 301) + (AT 519) ("Yahshilikka - yawizlik" ("Evil to Good")), where the given device performs quite an interesting function: the length of the main character's road is emphasized, thus the course of events in the fairytale slows down. In this type of texts the character constantly performs one and the same action, but the target object changes. The last link of the chain here is designed to solve the fairytale conflict.

Taking into consideration the levels at which repetition is used, its following subtypes are distinguished:

1) word-text (or thematic-rhematic) stringing;

2) narrative-compositional – duplication of text segments which are semantically integral (as a rule, it is accompanies with a reprise);

3) strictly structural – duplication of text segments which are integral in terms of meaning [11, 176].

Stringing at the word-text level is a solely reproductive device. This type of stringing is based on the model of thematic-rhematic progression, which is here step-by-step presentation of information. In this case the text takes the form of a thematic-rhematic chain, where the topic of each link appears to be a transformed rheme of the preceding link.

The model of a thematic-rhematic chain occurs in Tatar fairytales of magic: in the formula of the div's soul location (AT 327 B + AT 513 A + AT 302 ("Utiz ul" ("Thirty Sons")), AT 531 + AT 550 + AT 302 + AT 313 ("Unberenche Akhmet" ("The Eleventh Akhmet")) and in the description of the road to the other kingdom (AT 313 A "Balikchi kart" ("The Fisher"), AT 530 + AT 301 + AT 519 "Aigali Batyr" ("Aigali Batyr")).

There are the following types of stringing at the narrative-compositional level: stringing of the motive; stringing of actions (subject and object stringing); stringing of characters.

The literary device of stringing the motive generally appears in Tatar fairytales of daily life and implies there being a repeated element, the motive, when one episode is included within one link of the chain. Texts of this type of fairytales (AT 1685 ("Angiralik balasi" ("Misfortune from Foolishness")), AT 1696 = AA 1696 ("keynilar da keynilar" ("Beaten Again and Again")) are organized on the basis of the thematic-rhematic progression model and narrate about the foolish things the main characters did, providing an opportunity to ridicule human flaws. The device of subject stringing of an action is based on one character performing one and the same action, while the object or the circumstantial element, which the action targets, changes. In this case repetition is accompanied by a reprise – a set of sentences. A manifold developed reprise amplifies the rhythmic structure of the text and creates a particular melody of the fairytale when coupled with a relevant intonation, thus developing aesthetic skills in young listeners (AA 480 ("Ayda, kizim bezge" ("Come here, daughter")), AT 510 A ("Kiygak kaz" ("A Wild Goose")), AA 333 ("Gulchachak" ("Gulchachak")).

When the text structure is organized according to the device of object stringing of an action, different characters take turns in performing one and the same action, while the object or the circumstantial element does not change. This type of stringing is used as the basic compositional principle of fairytales with the plot A 2025 ("Kurbala" ("Kurbala")), AT 950 ("Haylakar Taz" ("The Cunning Bald-head")). In these fairytales it is the main structure-forming element of each of the text episodes (depending on the number of characters).

The device of stringing characters is illustrative only of magic fairytales and occurs when it is the number and type of characters, not the repeated action, that is important in the fairytale. Structuring a text by means of the given type of stringing typically can be found in plots of Tatar magic fairytales where characters are introduced consecutively (AT 530 = AA 530 A) + (AT 301) + (AT 519) ("Yahshilikka - yawizlik" ("Evil for Good")), AT 530 + AT 301 + (AT 519) ("Aigali Batyr" ("Aygali Batyr")), AT 301 A + (AT 519) ("Tanbatyr" ("Tanbatyr")), AT 650 A + AT 301 B ("Kamyr Batyr" ("Kamyr Batyr")).

In fairytale texts one can find the device of stringing which implies that a specific plot is included within one link. Separate links in the chain are connected only at the semantic and individual levels: one character (a fool, a fox) consecutively performs a set of actions. This scheme underlies the structure of fairytales about deceit and stupid things a fox did (AT 1384 + AT 1245 ("Gakilli bala" ("A Clever Child")), AT 1681 A = AA 1681 + AT 1643 («Tile Taz" ("The Bald Fool")). The function of the given device is obvious: intensifying the adventurous dynamic of the fairytale and also revealing the dominant trait of the character's personality more vividly and completely.

Conclusion

Stringing is a type of repetition when inter-connected links form a consecutive chain. Two types of stringing are distinguished: linear and emphasizing. The emphasizing type is distinct by structures in which links are built-up according to the principle of ascending or descending.

The structures in which equal chain links are built-up consecutively are referred to as linear stringing. This device is common for structures of Tatar fairytale texts and is serves to amplify the main idea of the literary work: inevitability of a retribution for a committed misdeed (the didactic function), and also for creating the atmosphere of expecting a dramatic outcome (the aesthetic function).

Structures in which the main link of the chain is accentuated are also referred to as emphasizing stringing. This link can complete the literary work resolving the plot conflict, or it becomes the centre around which the fairytale plot evolves. This device is also productive in Tatar fairytale texts.

The device of emphasizing stringing in ascending order is illustrative of the Tatar fairytales in which helper-animals are the main characters. In this case the chain is formed by lining-up animal characters according to the principle of ascending order of their physical parameters, will-power, or size, and typically the last link character performs the story-line action.

The device of emphasizing stringing in descending order is remarkable for participation of characters which are lined-up in descending order of their distinctive traits; it is used for emphasizing the length of the character's road, thus the course of events in the fairytale slows down. In this type of texts the character constantly performs one and the same action, but the target object changes. The last link of the chain is designed to solve the fairytale conflict.

Taking into account the levels at which repetition is used, its following subtypes are distinguished: 1) Word-text stringing where stringing is based on the model of thematic-rhematic progression. In this case the text takes the form of a

thematic-rhematic chain, where the topic of each link appears to be a transformed rheme of the preceding link. 2) Stringing at the narrative-compositional level, when connection of links occurs due to stringing of the motive, stringing of actions (subject and object), and stringing of characters. 3) Structural stringing, when a specific plot is included within one link and links in the chain are connected only at the semantic and individual levels. The functional field of this device consists in intensifying the adventurous dynamics of a Tatar fairytale and revealing the dominant trait in the character's personality.

Resume

Repetition is quite a common device of structural organization in a Tatar fairytale text. As a result of using multiple repetitions, typically a specific structure, called a chain-type structure in the given paper, occurs. A chain-type structure is built-up on the basis of semantically integral segments (links) that are repeated at least three times and might also include a reprise, i.e. a repeated verbal-semantic unit, which structurally organizes the text. All links are further inter-connected by relations of succession, thus we can state that the device of stringing is the most universal for the Tatar fairytale text.

Corresponding Author:

Dr.Fanzilya Khakimovna Zavgarova
Kazan (Volga) Federal University
Kremlevskaya str., 18, Kazan, 420008, Russia

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