

**TRADITIONAL EXPRESSIONS IN FOLKTALES FROM RUSSKOYE USTYE**  
**EXPRESSÕES TRADICIONAIS EM CONTOS FOLCLÓRICOS DE RUSSKOYE USTYE**  
**EXPRESIONES TRADICIONALES EN CUENTOS POPULARES DE RUSSKOYE USTYE**

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**ABSTRACT:** The article deals with the study of traditional linguistic formulas in the folktales of Russkoye Ustye and the semantic-value space inherent in the Russian old residents' subdialects of Yakutia testifying to the figurative-speech stereotypes of linguistic culture. Presumably, since the beginning of the 17th century, Russian old residents have been compactly living in a foreign-language environment in the Arctic territory of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), the largest federal subject of the Russian Federation. The old residents are the oldest group of the Russian people in Siberia. The research is carried out based on folklore and dialectal linguistic material collected from representatives of the ethnos and reflected in the collection "Folklore of Russkoye Ustye". In the semantics of traditional linguistic formulas used in folk tales that have their original and individual form compared to other Siberian folktales, there is a close connection between the lexical meaning and the specific realities of the life of Russian old residents in Yakutia.

**KEYWORDS:** Subdialect. Old resident. Traditional expressions. National specific features. Linguistic worldview.

**RESUMO:** O artigo trata do estudo das fórmulas linguísticas tradicionais dos contos populares de Russkoye Ustye e do espaço valor-semântico inerente aos subdialetos de Yakutia, antigos residentes russos, atestando os estereótipos do discurso figurativo da cultura linguística. Presumivelmente, desde o início do século 17, os antigos residentes russos têm vivido compactamente em um ambiente de língua estrangeira no território ártico da República de Sakha (Yakutia), o maior súdito federal da Federação Russa. Os antigos residentes são o grupo mais antigo do povo russo na Sibéria. A pesquisa é realizada com base em material folclórico e linguístico dialetal coletado de representantes da etnia e refletido na coleção "Folclore de Russkoye Ustye". Na semântica das fórmulas linguísticas tradicionais usadas em contos folclóricos, que têm sua forma original e individual comparada a outros contos folclóricos siberianos, há uma conexão estreita entre o significado lexical e as realidades específicas da vida dos antigos residentes russos na Yakutia.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Subdialecto. Residente antigo. Expressões tradicionais. Características específicas nacionais. Visão linguística do mundo.

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**RESUMEN:** *El artículo trata sobre el estudio de las fórmulas lingüísticas tradicionales en los cuentos populares de Russkoye Ustye y el espacio semántico de valores inherente a los subdialectos de los antiguos residentes rusos de Yakutia atestiguando los estereotipos del habla figurativa de la cultura lingüística. Presumiblemente, desde principios del siglo XVII, los viejos residentes rusos han estado viviendo de manera compacta en un entorno de lengua extranjera en el territorio ártico de la República de Sakha (Yakutia), el mayor sujeto federal de la Federación de Rusia. Los viejos residentes son el grupo más antiguo de la población rusa en Siberia. La investigación se lleva a cabo sobre la base del folclore y el material lingüístico dialectal recopilado de representantes de la etnia y reflejado en la colección "Folclore of Russkoye Ustye". En la semántica de las fórmulas lingüísticas tradicionales utilizadas en los cuentos populares que tienen su forma original e individual en comparación con otros cuentos populares siberianos, existe una estrecha conexión entre el significado léxico y las realidades específicas de la vida de los antiguos residentes rusos en Yakutia.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Subdialecto. Viejo residente. Expresiones tradicionales. Características específicas nacionales. Cosmovisión lingüística.*

## Introduction

The study of the great folk tale tradition of Russkoye Ustye is based on the unique material collected over almost a century to be introduced into the wide linguocultural circulation. The folk tales of the Russkoye Ustye people are one of the wonderful pages of folk poetry not only in Yakutia but also in Russia as a whole. The folk tales of Russkoye Ustye contain a variety of folklore vocabulary and include descriptions of the realities of Russian life in the Arctic. The study of the vocabulary of folk subdialects as a source of linguistic and cultural information and a means of comprehending the cultural space of a certain ethnic group is a priority area of modern linguistics (KARAULOV, 1987; PETROVA; ZHONDOROVA, 2018; ZHONDOROVA, 2018a). Moreover, the identification and systematization of dialect vocabulary from the standpoint of cultural linguistics allows broadening the understanding of the nature of the dialectal culture in Yakutia (BOGUSLAVSKII, 1994; YAKUTSKO-RUSSKII SLOVAR, 1997). The relationship of the people's language and culture represents a long-standing problem of the national-cultural component of the meaning of the word, while the concept itself provides for the determination of the status of this component in the semantic structure of the word (DIBROVA, 1989; NOVIKOV, 1997). Traditional expressions are seen as set linguistic sayings characteristic of a folklore text. Long-term contacts with the local population of the region and the influence of foreign-language folklore are some of the essential conditions for the existence of the folk tales of Russkoye Ustye.

## Methods

We carried out the theoretical analysis of academic works and applied the contrastive and comparative method of studying the linguistic material.

Each territorial variety of a language, along with general linguistic, has its specific ways of recording cultural information caused by intra-linguistic or extralinguistic factors. The folk tales of Russkoye Ustye are one of the pages of Russian folk poetry, its spiritual and material culture. Initially historically necessary, the social and material cohesion of Russkoye Ustye was also reinforced by a common worldview and folklore consciousness (SOFRONOV, 1961; KON, 1978). This was reflected in the artistic attitude towards life, recorded in the folklore of Russkoye Ustye. The folk tales have a particular style and form. In general, the folk tales are original and individual compared to other folk tales from Russian Siberia and Russia as a whole.

The textual analysis of the outstanding masters from the Russkoye Ustye storytelling school proves the strict adherence to the rules of the local school, which, was a consequence of the communal approach to the process of folk tale creation. Many researchers noted the richness of the folklore in this region, which prompted philologists and specialists in Russian studies to initiate a project for introducing the unique folk tale material into the wide public circulation. Most of the analyzed material is represented by the materials of N.A. Gabyshev, a member of the folklore-dialectological expedition of the Institute of Language, Literature, and History of the Yakutsk Division of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, which surveyed Russkoye Ustye in 1946, published in the collection of the folklore of Russkoye Ustye. We also used notes by Druzhinina (2002) and Samsonov (1996). In total, over 120 fairy-tale texts were analyzed and selected for translation into modern Russian literary language.

## Results

The population of the lower reaches of the Indigirka, which is part of Russkoye Ustye nasleg, fluctuated in number at different times but did not usually exceed 300 (this includes the Russified aborigines of the region). Thus, even three dozen storytellers representing the tradition of the locus for more than 120 years are a representative indicator.

Keeping the treasury of their native dialectic speech, the Russian inhabitants communicated with the peoples living side by side with them in the polar tundra. Therefore, the influence of local conditions and aborigines could not

but affect them, because they had to adapt to a long, constant life in the far North. The Russians learned from the aborigines the techniques of hunting, catching and processing furs, learned a lot of useful things about the flora and fauna of the vast land (SAMSONOV, 1993, p. 167).

Developing in its special way, the folk tale of Russkoye Ustye, even in its present state, has hardly experienced modern general Russian folk-tale trends: psychologization, motivations, the desire for everyday life in magical narratives, strengthening social accents, and the "poetry of details". The development nature of the region of Russian old residents in the lower reaches of the Indigirka as a settlement largely determined the specific features of the local folk-tale tradition. This "pocket of ancient Russian culture", according to the local history experts, was formed in an unclear, semi-mysterious way, and the temporal and spatial framework and the way of its settlement have not yet been finally established. The formation of a permanent population here took place when the Russian people as an ethnic community had already taken place on the mainland, from where the first Russkoye Ustye settlers came. Judging even by the folk tale texts, this may not have been single resettlement from the west of Russia, although historians believe the opposite. In this sense, the study of the folklore tradition of the region is a historical and ethnographic source in the study of the Russian old residents of the Indigirka (CHIKACHEV, 1990; KAMENETSKAYA, 1986). The northeastern Russian folk tale is distinguished by its originality which is largely rooted in the historical, ethnographic, socio-geographical, and other features of regional life. Therefore, one must first, note the complex material and spiritual culture of the Indigir people which will help to explain the specific nature of the creative existence of their folk tales separately and as a whole – as a local school. V.M. Zenzinov noted that Russkoye Ustye inhabitants "live in a closed Russian world, completely not merging with the surrounding ring of Yakuts, Yukaghirs, Lamuts, and Chukchi".

The study of the vocabulary of folk subdialects as a source of linguistic and cultural information and a means of comprehending the cultural space of a certain ethnic group is a priority area of modern linguistics. Moreover, the identification and systematization of dialect vocabulary from the standpoint of cultural linguistics allows us to broaden our understanding of the nature of the dialectal culture of Yakutia. According to Druzhinina (1997, p. 4), a great addiction to antiquity and the traditions of grandfathers, isolation from the "big world", the isolated life of everyone among a narrow and limited circle of people forced the "pre-life" Russians at the mouth of the Indigirka to preserve the old Russian language and culture of their ancestors. The study of the great folk tale tradition of Russkoye Ustye is based on the unique material collected over almost a century to introduce the material into the wide public

circulation. The folk tales of Russkoye Ustye people are one of the wonderful pages of folk poetry not only in Yakutia but also in Russia as a whole. Russkoye Ustye folk tales contain a variety of folklore vocabulary and include descriptions of the realities of Russian life in the Arctic. Fairy tales are filled with linguistic and culturological units, the actualization of which among the republic population is relevant. However, the actualization poses a huge difficulty in understanding the key linguistic facts of the history of Russian culture by modern students, since they contain many ethnographic realities and linguistic features that have arisen as a result of many years of living in a foreign cultural environment. But “the fairy tales of the Russian Ustye, which have an undoubted educational, cultural, civic potential, are practically not present either in the informational, educational or cultural environment of our republic (ZHONDOROVA, 2018b, p. 29). Russkoye Ustye population gives special preference to a folk tale, in which the most archaic layer of vocabulary has been preserved. The medieval, archaic in language and style, folk tale collection was a powerful incentive to preserve the traditional worldview and national identity of this fragment of the Russian nation. Folk tales are an integral part of the culture and everyday identity of the Russian old residents of the Arctic. Today, besides numerous separate, unsystematic publications, more than 30 Russian folk-tale collections of Siberia are in academic circulation (AZBELEV; MESHCHERSKY, 1986, p. 28). The Russian folk tale in a foreign language environment attracts researchers primarily by its originality caused by long-term contact with the aboriginal population. In this case, one should talk about the ethnolinguistic resource of the linguistic environment, which has the specific features inherent in this region. Tales of Russkoye Ustye are a unique and richest monument of the history of Russian old-resident dialects of Yakutia, in which the mythopoetic language functions in unity with the culture of the people, and key concepts reflecting the life of the Russian people, its history, culture, customs, worldview, beliefs, and relationships with the local population are actualized. Local realities, getting into fairy-tale poetics, once again confirm the famous thesis of Bakhtin (1979, p. 93) that “one meaning reveals its depths by meeting and touching another, someone else’s meaning: a kind of dialogue begins between them, which overcomes isolation and one-sidedness these meanings, these cultures”. As an area of spiritual culture, folk tales reflect the people's perception of the world and represent the basic moral and ethical values of the people, commonly known as the "roots" or "soul". A folk tale as one of the central folklore genres is a treasury of folk wisdom, as well as a universal means of conveying folklore ideas about the world around and the person, which form the basis of the national worldview. The national character of folk tales is expressed in the assessment of the occurring events, characters’ names, and traditional

expressions that frame the fairy tale narrative. The folk tales of Russkoye Ustye contain a variety of folklore vocabulary and include descriptions of the realities of Russian life in the Arctic.

The population of Russkoye Ustye particularly prefers fairy tales in which the most archaic layer of vocabulary has been preserved. The medieval, archaic in language and style, folk tale collection was a powerful incentive to preserve the traditional worldview and national identity of this fragment of the Russian nation. Folk tales are an integral part of the culture and everyday identity of the Russian old residents of the Arctic. The folk tale tradition of Russkoye Ustye looks very original against the background of the general Russian. The main characters names in folk tales are mythological and archaic: Arko Arkovich, Polkan-bogaty, Ivashko-Pepelyshko, Belomonet-bogaty, Shvetogor-bogaty, Druzhevna-the queen, Duma the Wisest, Tsar-Zara, Beauty Under the Sun, Zhelechko, Tat, Nagoi-bird, Chelbunchut, Gol kabatskoi, Anchiukh, Crooked Erakhta, and others. The aphorisms in the language as a reflection of the mentality of the national linguistic worldview of the Russian old residents in Yakutia are the most culture-intensive layer of the language. Fairy tales of Russkoye Ustye usually have traditional beginnings and endings. The fairy tales often contain typical epithets and set expressions passed on by storytellers from generation to generation. Fairy tales are characterized by a particular style: the presence of traditional formulas of the beginning and ending, repetitive structures, and traditional expressions. Traditional expressions are set linguistic sayings characteristic of a folklore text. Usually, the tale of Russkoye Ustye begins with a traditional beginning, which contributes to the perception of the tale as a fictional story, opposed to reality. The tale is full of traditional fairy-tale formulas and episodes: "In a certain kingdom, in a certain state, there lived a king"; "Once upon a time there was a rich merchant", "Once upon a time there was a rich merchant", "Guidon the king lived in a certain kingdom, in a certain state", "Once upon a time, there was a Christian", "There was a rich merchant. Dzhe, lives. Dzhe, lived, lived, lived", "Once upon a time there was an old man with an old woman", "In a certain kingdom, in a certain state, there was Anchiukh Anchiuskoy – a tsar over all tsars, a king over all kings". There is a kind of prelude to a folk-tale action, with a certain rhythm. The formula "there once was" is found most often in folk tales, the formula of the presence/absence of children accompanies it: "He has neither a son nor a daughter..."; "He asks God, holds services and kisses icons: Give me, God, a son or a daughter – to replace me in the old age and bring me joy in the young age, at the hour of death and to commemorate my passing", "He has one son", "Once upon a time there was a man – he was unmarried, lived to see a gray beard and white hair; thinks to himself that "after

my death, there is no heir – who can rule such a kingdom?", "These Christians had a daughter. Lived, lived, lived. Then suddenly another was born. Then the third. They lived a little more. The fourth was born. Then the fifth, then the sixth, then the seventh. Then the eighth was born", "And he is unmarried", "Give me, God, a son or a daughter – to bring me joy in the young age and replace me in the old age, commemorate my passing at the hour of death", "They lived a little. His wife was in the family way". This beginning serves as the start of the transition to the main fairytale action, forming the most popular combination of the beginning of a fairy tale. In many folk tales of Russkoye Ustye, there are set expressions characteristic of the Yakut language. The use of the interjection "Dzhe" is not accidental, as it reflects the communicative situation of interethnic communication focused on the communication of the storyteller, performer with the audience. The traditional linguistic final formulas of Russkoye Ustye tale are synonymous with similar formulas for the beginning of the tale with the key combination "there once was": "And he began to live and continued and to this day", "It is over. They began to live and live, and continued to this day", developing due to the affirmation of the well-being of the characters: "He was chosen as a king, and began to live and continued forever as a king", "He took all their wealth and began to live with the old woman and continued to this day", "and he became the tsar over all tsars, the king over all kings, and began to eat and be, and continued to this day", "and they got married, began to live and be, and continued to this day!", "And they became... got married, and they began to live and be, and continued to this day". Very often, a statement denoting the end of a fairy tale adjoins the final formula: "Dzhe! That's all", "Uh! Well, that's enough! Eh!", "It's over." There is a popular version of the feast at the end of the tale and a reward for the narrator: "With that joy, the father organized a ball, they began to feast, eat for twelve days without stopping. The beggars, the poor, the prisoners rolled in barrels. And I was there", "They were eating and celebrating for twelve days without stopping", "The drinking started. The beggars and the poor rolled in barrels, and the prisoners rolled out barrels", "They began to live well. I was with them, drank tea. They live smartly, gain wealth".

In the folk tales of Russkoye Ustye, the wisdom of the people is reflected, expressed in proverbs and sayings: "...he got into one ear – drank and ate, got out of the other – washed and got dressed," became a smart man: from scythe to scythe to the pouring rain, to see the morning dawn". Or: "He began to saddle the horse. He put the saddlecloth on the saddlecloth, over the saddlecloths, a Cherkassian saddle, pulled up twelve girth straps of silk, different silk, Shemakha silk. Silk does not break, damask steel does not bend – not for the sake of beauty but for the sake of a heroic strength"; "Do not order to execute, order to say the word",

"hair to hair, voice to voice", etc. Such folk-tale formulas exist not only in tales of the Kiselevs – father and son – but also among others. Their origin is partly related to the Turkic tradition of designating beauty; sometimes this tradition is found in Russian texts. In the everyday speech of the population from Russkoye Ustye and the Indigirka, the phraseological unit "to see the morning dawn" means a description of a very beautiful person or phenomenon.

Phraseological units are actively used in folk tales of Russkoye Ustye as set linguistic formulas. The precedence of the phraseological units used in Russkoye Ustye fairy tales is their inherent property which consists in the ability to be included in the context of fairy tales and at the same time to exist in everyday communication, due to its pragmatic properties. All phraseological units used in fairy tales can be divided into several groups: describing the appearance of a fairytale character ("beauty under the sun", "beautiful sun", "beautiful girl", "good fellow", "indescribable beauty", "he has no one, only the soul in his body", "she may be a Lamut, even a Chukchi, even a Yakut"); a person's disposition and emotions ("a priest's wife who likes guests", "a priest's son-in-law", "empty glory", "chase parting"), sensations and perceptions ("In a certain kingdom, in a certain state there lived a king: if you live high, the wind will get you, if you live low, the water will get you, on such a level place as bread on a tablecloth", "he ran and ran – for a long time, for a short time – suddenly he saw: there is a yurt", "the days, the hours were fulfilled", "the evening began to fall", "one cannot see a thing", "pitch black", "the horse is running – the earth is trembling, there is a cloud of dust"), imagination ("to look ahead", "I ran from the old age so that the old age would not find me. Have you seen the old age?"), emotions and feelings ("They love it so much, they pity it so much that they don't even let the wind blow and they don't let the sun burn", "he went to the sea to throw a net", "he wrapped his city in red velvet", "disappeared completely", "sleep on it", "wander around").

The ancient folklore concept which fixes the idea of a force opposed to God in the linguistic consciousness is named "Yaga" in the subpolar Russkoye Ustye folklore worldview and is represented by two varieties: Yaga-the saboteur and Yaga-the assistant to the protagonist. This can be argued based on the frequency of the use of this word in folktale texts. The image of the Yaga-the saboteur was formed according to changes in the consciousness over several generations, which was due to the historical, ethnographic, and geographical features of the region. This is the difference between the folklore conceptual sphere and the general cultural one. Long-term contacts with the local population of the region and the influence of foreign-language folklore are some of the essential conditions for



the existence of this East Slavic concept. Characters with a negative ethical component in fairy tales were called Dege-Baba, Dzhege-baba, Ege-baba, Yega-baba, Ega-baba, Yaga the shaman, the Udagan, the image of a Yakut or Yukagir shaman, uncharacteristic for Russian folklore, is replaced by Yaga. ("Asked Yega-baba, "grandmother, give me the fire, the fire is out!" She says:"Let me drink blood!" – "Well, grandma, let's go home, then I'll give blood!" – "Okay!", "Finally, Ivan Tsarevich ruined this Yaga-baba", "Yaga-baba tortured him, for the third year we have been forging shila – the iron people".

In the tales of the lower reaches of the Indigirka, this image is much less commonly found under its name Yaga. The description of Yaga's dwelling is rarely called a hut and has traditional "chicken legs", most often it is a yurt, sometimes a spinning one, which in its way defines the concept of "Baba Yaga". Often in Russkoye Ustye fairy tales, Ega-baba is called the mother of animals: "This baba has children: wolves, bears, foxes, silver and red foxes, arctic foxes; the animals in this world are all her children".

In the fairy tales of Russkoye Ustye, Baba Yaga can act as the keeper of fire and dead and living water. "– And where you keep the living, young water, tell me. In front of the door, there is a barn, tied with a stripe, sealed. Enter this barn, on the right side, – she says, – there is the bad water, on the left, there is the good water". "Baba-Yaga was released. Baba-Yaga left and she ran into this barn and got mixed up and drank the bad water. Dzhe took it apart more. She ran to them, began to fight with them. She began to fight more. They caught her by the head and they ripped off their head, threw it out of the window...". In the north, the fire was worshiped; this cult became particularly significant. According to the local population around Russkoye Ustye, the hostess of the house lives in the fire. Perhaps that is why the "copper-breasted" Baba Yaga very close to the Yakuts and Yukagirs appeared in Russkoye Ustye tales. In fairy tales, ritual and ancient religious and mythological ideas about the other world and everyday view of fire are intertwined. For the Evenks, for example, the most terrible thing was to be left without fire. Fire is an element and like any element, it could be both good and bad for a person. "There were thunder and lightning", "He only answered in Russian, Well, Ivan the son of Kobyl'nikov, wait for me in three days with a fiery cloud", "Marfita-the princess sat and sat, the fire went out. She went to the Yaga-baba to ask for fire. Grandma, give me a little fire – to stoke, – she says, – comrades went away, I must make food and drink. Give me, – she says, – a tit to suck, then I will give you, – she says. Alright. Gives her a tit to suck. She pointed with a needle and began to drink blood. Had enough, stopped. She gave the fire. She left", "And Baba Yaga herself travels in an iron mortar and steers with an iron pestle. Finally, Ivan Tsarevich overcame this Baba Yaga", "She was traveling in this

mortar and fell into a pit". In Russkoye Ustye tale, the power of Baba Yaga lies in her hair. "And when you let her hair loose, throw one [strand] to the wall, another under the bed, and still other to the headboard, divide into three parts, and we will steer her by the braids...", "Ivan jumped on Baba Yaga, grabbed the braids and drove off". Such reprisal against Baba Yaga is typical. Baba Yaga became a symbol of evil spirits, an evil force in Russkoye Ustye fairytale tradition, who takes revenge on a person, kidnaps them, and takes their blood and flesh when a person violates any ethical, moral, and everyday prohibitions.

## Conclusion

Traditional linguistic formulas in folk tales and their values are manifested in folklore linguistic consciousness and are sensitive to the emotional and expressive shades of the meaning of words which are usually the expression of the people's collective attitude to events, life situations, and people's actions, especially considering the edifying function of folk set expressions. In general, both positive and negative linguistic and cultural characteristics are explained by the facts of objective reality, the expression of respect, approval, or condemnation and disdain.

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