



## **FANTASTICAL CHARACTERS IN FOLK TALES AND THEIR EDUCATIONAL FUNCTION**

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**Abstract:** This article analyzes the essence and significance of fantastical characters commonly found in folk tales—such as dragons, demons, fairies, magicians, heroes, and other mythical beings—as well as their impact on children’s consciousness and their moral and educational functions. The study highlights how these fantastical elements help children distinguish between good and evil and foster qualities such as courage, honesty, and patience. Furthermore, the pedagogical potential of symbolic characters is evaluated from a linguoculturological perspective.

**Keywords:** folk tale, fantastical character, education, symbolic meaning, positive and negative hero, oral folk literature, linguoculturology.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The folk tale is one of the oldest and most widespread genres of oral folklore. It not only depicts reality, but also embodies the moral, aesthetic, and philosophical views of the people. Especially, the fantastical characters found in tales—such as dragons, demons, fairies, magicians, evil bandits, or magical animals—though far from reality, carry deep symbolic and educational meanings. Through these characters, society conveys opposing concepts such as good and evil, truth and falsehood, diligence and laziness, loyalty and betrayal to children's minds.

Folk tales are an invaluable spiritual heritage of every nation’s oral tradition, reflecting generational experience, dreams, moral values, and worldview. Tales hold a special place in the upbringing of children, as they symbolically introduce important concepts like virtue and vice, truth and deception. Fantastical characters—such as dragons, demons, fairies, wizards, and magical birds or animals—make tales more engaging and memorable.

Such characters add symbolic depth to simple plots, shaping children’s moral worldview. The victory of good characters and the defeat of evil forces strengthen children's belief in justice. Therefore, fantastical images in tales are not merely artistic elements but serve as powerful pedagogical tools.

This article explores the types of fantastical characters in tales, their semantic and moral functions, and their relevance in modern education. It thus reveals the educational potential of our national oral folklore.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study uses comparative-analytical and semantic approaches to examine fantastical characters in Uzbek folk tales such as *Zumrad and Qimmat*, *The Rich and the Poor*, and *The Boy and the Demon*. Each character's functional and moral role is analyzed within the context of the tale. In addition, pedagogical literature and sources on child psychology are utilized to examine the educational impact of these characters from a psycholinguistic perspective. The symbolic meaning of these characters in the national worldview is also assessed through a

linguoculturological approach.

## RESULTS

The analysis revealed that fantastical characters in folk tales perform the following educational functions:

**Dragons, demons, and evil sorcerers** represent evil, tyranny, and injustice, creating a psychological distance in children from such behaviors;

**Fairies, magical animals, wise elders** symbolize goodness, wisdom, assistance, and patience, thus encouraging these virtues;

**Ordinary heroes (a child, a poor man, a shepherd)** achieve success through hard work, honesty, and bravery, promoting these qualities;

Characters are placed in contrast with each other to help children understand the value of positive traits;

Many tales promote humanistic qualities like admitting faults, loyalty, and maintaining integrity through these characters

## DISCUSSION

Fantastical characters are not just artistic elements but are also powerful pedagogical tools. From the standpoint of child psychology, symbolic imagery enables children to comprehend real-life situations more easily. Therefore, moral lessons conveyed through magical characters are more deeply rooted in children's memory. The stark contrast between good and evil characters helps form clear moral standards in young minds.

When used as didactic materials in educational settings, such characters enrich children's spiritual world. The adaptability of tale characters also makes it easier to integrate them into modern education. Thus, their potential is relevant not only to folklore studies but also to pedagogy and moral education.

## CONCLUSION

Fantastical characters in folk tales serve as symbolic embodiments of the moral values preserved and passed down through generations. Through them, children absorb positive behaviors, ethical standards, and life lessons. This study confirms that fantastical characters can be effectively used as didactic tools in moral education. Integrating these characters into modern educational practices yields positive results.

These characters reflect the spiritual and aesthetic worldview of the people. Dragons, demons, fairies, magical animals, and wizards convey the struggle between good and evil and promote human virtues through oral folklore. In addition to enriching the narrative, they serve as effective means of moral education for the younger generation.

The findings of this study show that fantastical characters play an important role in influencing children's consciousness and guiding them toward qualities like kindness, courage, honesty, and patience. Symbolic characters help deliver memorable lessons that become internalized and reflected in behavior.

In conclusion, fantastical characters in tales should not be viewed as mere decorative elements,

but as pedagogically significant tools within the national education system. A deeper study of their semantic, cultural, and educational potential is essential for imparting moral values in modern education

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