

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF LITERARY CHARACTERS OF BELARUSIAN FOLK TALES AND ENGLISH FOLK TALES

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Nowadays many adults blame the youth all over the world for being unrooted. That young people do not know the national values of their people, its history and culture.

On the one hand, I cannot but agree with this opinion. I should say that most of my peers live in the virtual and digital world rather than the real one. We are really into gadgets, our smart phones surfing the Internet. But, on the other hand, I'd like to admit that a great deal of adolescents do care about their place in life, about their self-identity. And, as far as I'm concerned, we cannot answer these questions without referring to our national identity, the wisdom of our ancestors.

Last year some of my classmates and I took part in the international transborder project “Nature Treasure without Borders” where we dealt with people from several neighbouring countries trying to explore and preserve the unique natural heritage of our region.

While working on the project and communicating with people from various countries, I noticed the differences in our behaviour, our way of life, in the things which we valued most. And I got interested in the way people of different nations see and describe themselves.

As I am a Belarusian and speak Russian and Belarusian along with learning English as a foreign language, and have a dream of visiting England one day, I have chosen these two peoples to study.

If we want to find out about a nation we need to refer to its culture, literature in particular. But analysing literature of a nation involves special knowledge which I lack. Still there exists a unique literature genre which is universal and understandable to both children and adults, to literary critics and non-professional readers. This is a folk tale. The folk genre depicts the wisdom of a nation most of all the other genres, its values. It creates images which mirror real people.

So I decided to study Belarusian and English folk tales in order to make verbal portraits of typical Belarusian and English characters and to see whether there are more differences or similarities between these characters.

So, the **object** of my research is Belarusian and English folk tales.

The **subject** of this research is the typical literary characters of Belarusian and English folk tales.

The **aim** of my work is to compare typical literary characters of Belarusian and English folk tales for the subsequent writing of my own tales in English and Belarusian based on the analysis of these literary characters.

The **objectives** of the research are the following:

- 1) to study the peculiarities of the genre of folk tales;
- 2) to study Belarusian and English everyday folk tales in order to distinguish the main traits of the hero and the heroine in them;

3) to identify the differences and similarities of the main characters in Belarusian and English everyday folk tales;

4) to write my own tales in English and Belarusian based on the typical traits of the literary characters under study and analyse these works.

I have applied the following **methods** of research in order to achieve the aim of the research work:

- analysis;
- synthesis;
- generalization;
- comparison;
- analogy;
- modelling.

In the first chapter of this research work I analyse various literary sources and distinguish the peculiarities of the genre of folk tales.

Having read 32 Belarusian folk tales and 36 English folk tales as well as having studied literary critics, in the second chapter of the research work I analyse Belarusian and English everyday folk tales and distinguish the differences and similarities of the main characters in them. Their chief characteristics are as follows:

1. common social background of the tales (one-parent family, childlessness, or many children in a family, poverty, cruel stepmother, contrasting the abilities of children);

2. both Belarusian and English folk tales are family-orientated and praise family ties greatly [1];

3. the hero in Belarusian folk tales is depicted as a brave, kind, poor, smart and savvy, hard-working and hospitable man who longs for justice, who is respectful for parents and elderly people and attached to his homeland (“The Orphan and the Miraculous Horse”) [2, 3];

4. the heroine in Belarusian folk tales is described as a beautiful, kind, good-natured, witty and smart, modest, helpful, hospitable and respectful girl who is ready for heroic deeds for the sake of her nearest and dearest (“Asinka”) [2, 3];

5. the hero in English folk tales is depicted as a brave, strong, smart and savvy, enterprising and adventurous, independent, or even eccentric man who is ready for heroic deeds for the sake of his beloved (“The Brave Shepherd and the Dragon”). He can be handsome, poor, lazy in some folk tales. The main character tends to cheat in order to achieve his aim (“Lazy Tommy”) [4, 5, 6];

6. the heroine in English folk tales is described as a beautiful, kind, fair, quick-minded and smart girl. English folk tales cannot boast a wide variety of main female characters [4, 5, 6].

As the result of my research work I wrote four everyday tales (“Asinka” and “The Orphan and the Miraculous Horse” in Belarusian, “The Brave Shepherd and the Dragon” and “Lazy Tommy” in English) based on the studies I have done.

In the third chapter of the research work I analyse my everyday folk tales “Asinka” and “The Orphan and the Miraculous Horse”, “The Brave Shepherd and the Dragon” and “Lazy Tommy”, distinguish the differences and similarities of the main characters in them.

I am really amazed at the important role heroines play in Belarusian folk tales. People have high expectations for them but at the same time they are often mentioned in this literary genre as mistresses of their own fate rather than passive watchers. And I tried to show this feature in my everyday tale “Asinka”.

Having made the verbal portraits of the characters of the Belarusian and English folk tales, I have a better understanding of our national character as well as the national character of the English people. I hope this knowledge will prepare me for my future life, will help other people to realise what qualities are appreciated in their society. Moreover, if I ever go to England, the results of my research work will provide me with a very important ability of a modern person to present the unique culture of my country to foreigners without being rude or impolite. Knowing our commonalities and differences is the best way to build reliable and trust-based relations.

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