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Linguistic Features of Proverbs Containing Ornithonyms

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ABSTRACT

Proverbs are among the most valuable pearls of folk creativity. The content of these expressions frequently draws on elements of the natural world, such as animals, plants, and especially birds. Birds, perceived by humans as both familiar and distant beings, have become symbols of freedom, beauty, cunning, or loyalty within the natural world. Proverbs containing ornithonyms thus expand the stylistic resources of language and enhance its expressive power. This article examines the linguistic features of proverbs that include ornithonyms (bird names), analyzing their semantic nuances, connotative meanings, metaphorical functions, and national-cultural significance. In many languages, including Azerbaijani and English, the bird names employed in these proverbs symbolically express people's attitudes toward nature, human behaviors, and social relations. The article analyzes the concepts and socio-cultural meanings represented by different bird names, exploring how they function within proverbial structures. Through analogies between humans and birds, proverbs containing ornithonyms provide insights into various social and psychological phenomena. Special attention is given to the semantic structure and functional meanings of these proverbs. The main aim of the study is to identify the lexical-semantic, structural, and stylistic features of ornithonyms used in proverbs and to determine their metaphorical and symbolic functions. Furthermore, the research reveals the role of ornithonyms in shaping the folk worldview, examines the frequency and semantics of bird names in proverbs, and explores their national characteristics. Finally, the article explains their role as carriers of cultural and linguistic codes. The research is based on proverbs in the Azerbaijani language.

Keywords: Proverbs; Ornithonym; Semantics; Symbolism; Ethnolinguistics; Folklore

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1. Introduction

Proverbs constitute an essential component of folk wisdom and collective memory. They convey complex ideas and life experiences in concise, memorable expressions. Proverbs represent a vivid example of the people's wisdom and linguistic creativity, reflecting their way of life, worldview, and system of values. Proverbs containing ornithonyms form a distinct subgroup within these artistic expressions that employ animal names. The cultural worldview embodied in proverbs is shaped by diverse sources, one of which is bird names. In many cultures, proverbs involving birds reflect people's perceptions of the natural world, human behavior, and social values. In this respect, proverbs containing onomastic units constitute a valuable spiritual heritage. It is no coincidence that proper names are regarded as facts that revive historical memory: Every proper name in a language—every onomastic unit—is a product of socio-historical development. Proper names are real facts that preserve the traces of the past and carry them into the present; they are living witnesses of history^[1].

Lexical units derived from bird names carry rich meanings and symbolic associations. Proverbs containing ornithonyms function as a means of expressing how people perceive birds, attribute human qualities to them, and employ them to comment on human behavior and social norms. Birds, with their diverse behaviors, songs, and symbolic meanings, frequently appear as lexical elements in proverbs, functioning both literally and figuratively. The characteristics of birds' freedom, timidity, weakness, loyalty, vigilance, and so forth have been transformed into symbolic lexical units in folk creativity. Folklore traditions of world cultures, including Azerbaijani folklore, as well as classical and artistic literature and the spoken vernacular, contain zoonyms rich in lexical-semantic and grammatical features. Moreover, folklore includes various legends associated with certain birds and their names, such as the hoopoe, the partridge, the nightingale, the owl, the francolin, and others^[2].

The categorization of ornithonymic proverbs, along with the study of their semantic domains, idiomatic usage, cultural symbolism, and metaphorical potential, highlights their significance within a broader linguistic and cultural framework of expression.

2. Problem Statement and Relevance

One of the richest genres of folklore, proverbs are important linguistic units that reflect the worldview, life philosophy, moral norms, and cultural-spiritual values of the people. The ornithonyms (bird names) used within them demonstrate the people's attitude toward nature, their powers of observation, and their symbolic way of thinking. However, despite research conducted in the fields of folklore and linguistics, proverbs containing ornithonyms have not yet been subjected to a comprehensive and systematic linguistic analysis. In particular, the semantic features of these proverbs, their figurative meanings, symbolic connotations, and their function as carriers of national-cultural codes remain highly relevant issues in contemporary linguistics.

The relevance of the topic also lies in the fact that the use of bird names in folk creativity does not merely convey zoological meanings; rather, it reflects the people's worldview in ethnolinguistic and cultural dimensions. From this perspective, the study of ornithonyms in proverbs is of considerable importance both for linguistics and for cultural studies. Folklore samples require scholarly investigation in all periods, since although they are products of distant times, they continue to develop in our present day, giving rise to new examples. In this respect, proverbs attract attention with their linguistic richness. Thus, they may be subjected to scholarly and theoretical analysis in various branches of linguistics, and such analyses can yield new and valuable stylistic and linguistic insights.

3. Methodology

The study primarily employs the descriptive-linguistic method, through which the semantic, lexical, and stylistic features of proverbs containing ornithonyms are identified. In parallel, the comparative-historical method is applied to conduct a comparative analysis of folklore examples from different periods, as well as proverbs from other Turkic peoples. In addition, structural-semantic analysis is used to reveal the semantic load of ornithonyms in proverbs and their metaphorical and symbolic functions. An ethnolinguistic approach is also employed to explain the figurative representation of bird names in the worldview of the people and their role as

carriers of national-cultural codes. Since the classification of proverbs represents a multidimensional system, this study employs several complementary principles in their categorization: the formal-structural principle based on syntactic construction; the functional-semantic principle determined by meaning, function, and communicative role in speech; the figurative (poetic-linguistic) principle grounded in the use of artistic and stylistic devices; the comparative-typological principle applied in cross-cultural analysis of different nations' folklore; and the lexico-semantic principle focusing on the vocabulary and semantic relationships within proverbs.

4. Material

The materials used in the research were drawn from two collections titled *Proverbs*, published in Baku by "Öndər Publishing House" in 2004 (264 pages) and by "Nurlan Publishing House" in 2013 (476 pages), as well as from online sources providing information on the proverbs of other nations. From these materials, proverbs containing ornithonyms (names of birds) were selected and systematized. In total, approximately one hundred ornithonym-based proverbs were chosen and grouped for analysis. The linguistic features of these examples were examined in terms of their semantic domains (domestic birds, wild birds, behavioral characteristics, family and household relations, labor and diligence, human-nature relations, etc.), as well as from stylistic, phonetic, and grammatical perspectives.

5. Scientific Significance

The study of proverbs containing ornithonyms (bird names) holds particular importance for understanding the national and cultural worldview reflected in language. This research identifies how ornithonyms function within the paremiological system of the Azerbaijani language, examining their semantic load and symbolic function. By revealing the interaction between lexical, semantic, and cultural layers of the language, the study uncovers the conceptual and associative characteristics of bird imagery in folk thought. Consequently, it scientifically substantiates the role of natural elements, especially bird names, in shaping an integral linguistic picture of the world.

6. Scientific Novelty

1. A systematic collection and comparative analysis of ornithonyms used in Azerbaijani proverbs has been carried out, focusing on their semantic and grammatical features.
2. A semantic typology of bird names has been established, including metaphors based on behavior, character, calmness, and noisiness.
3. The ethnolinguistic and symbolic meanings of ornithonyms such as *crow*, *nightingale*, *eagle*, and *hen* have been analyzed in terms of their oppositional relationships and evaluative functions in folk cognition.
4. Through ornithonyms in proverbs, metaphorical models expressing human traits such as behavior, intellect, courage, and laziness have been identified.
5. For the first time, the role of ornithonyms in the imagery system of Azerbaijani paremiology has been comprehensively elucidated from a linguocultural perspective.

7. Main Findings

1. Proverbs containing ornithonyms reflect the people's powers of observation, their relationship with nature, and their tendency to compare bird behavior with human behavior.
2. In such proverbs, ornithonyms primarily perform metaphorical, symbolic, and evaluative functions.
3. The most frequently used ornithonyms, such as *crow*, *nightingale*, *eagle*, *hen*, and *rooster*, serve as linguistic means of expressing both positive and negative human characteristics.
4. Within proverbs, ornithonyms act as carriers of national mentality and ethnic values; they are products of folk wisdom, natural observation, and figurative thinking.
5. The study reveals that proverbs containing ornithonyms possess a stable structure within the phraseological system of the language and are distinguished by their emotional-expressive coloring, thereby enriching the imagery and expressiveness of the Azerbaijani language.

8. Discussion

The act of naming any entity in life constitutes one of the intriguing phenomena of language. The facts of naming serve the purpose of identifying people and the beings that play a role and hold significance in their lives. *“Proper names occupy an important place in the lexical system of a language. In this regard, it is impossible to study proper names using the same methods employed for common words. Therefore, lexicology, which investigates the vocabulary of a language, requires specialized branches dealing separately with common words and with proper names, and such a scientific ‘specialization’ currently exists in linguistics”*^[3]. Research indicates that the number of bird names and the frequency of their usage form an essential part of a nation’s linguistic worldview, which is why proverbs containing ornithonyms are often noted for emphasizing the mentality of a particular people^[4,5]. Numerous studies have highlighted the etymological, linguistic, and cultural aspects of proverbs with ornithonyms across different languages^[6]. In linguistics, there is a significant focus on comparative research of phraseological units containing ornithonymic components in various languages^[7–9]. At the same time, certain studies also address the comparative analysis of proverbs containing ornithonymic elements^[10,11]. Findings show that zoonyms are more widely used in general; nevertheless, ornithonyms, though less frequent than zoonyms, still possess broad potential for usage within the language. *“This type of linguistic phenomenon is expressed through various stylistic features, which ensure meaning, content, expressiveness, and emphasis in human communication.”* Consequently, ornithonyms are employed across all functional styles of language, scientific, journalistic, official correspondence, artistic, and oral discourse^[12]. Folklore examples also demonstrate that attitudes toward birds date back to ancient times. *“In general, in the mythopoetic tradition, birds are represented as symbols of divine essence, establishing a connection between cosmic zones. In Eurasian mythological systems, the bird was conceived as the primary mediator between the two separate spheres of the universe”*^[13]. Interestingly, while ornithonyms do appear in written literature to some extent, they are used most extensively in folklore genres. *“In particular, in fairy tales, birds are portrayed as zoomorphic guardians who provide benevolence. In tales and epics, they appear as mythic figures that define the ancestry of heroes”*^[14]. There

are also instances of bird names appearing in various dialects. For example, in the Shusha dialect of Azerbaijani, the bird name *“tuğrul”* is recorded^[15]. Linguistic studies once again confirm that onomastics has its own specific norms and laws. This idea substantiates the necessity of analyzing onyms not only from a linguistic perspective but also according to their inherent regularities. In his research, V. Bondaletov employed methods such as descriptive, historical, comparative, areal, semiotic, stylistic, linguopsychological, and statistical approaches to ensure a comprehensive study of onyms. These methods, in turn, determine the purpose and aspect of examining proper names^[16]. Birds have become diverse symbols in human life, associated both with natural phenomena and social relations. For centuries, birds have been perceived as symbols of freedom, swiftness, loftiness, and at times cunning and cowardice. In Azerbaijani proverbs as well, bird imagery is employed in both positive and negative senses. From this perspective, proverbs containing bird names are products of the people’s observation and reasoning. *“The totality of ornithonyms constitutes ornithological vocabulary. The ornithological lexicon of the Azerbaijani language has been formed over centuries. A large portion of the ornithological vocabulary of Azerbaijani has been in use from ancient times to the present day”*^[17]. The history of bird names is ancient. Rich inventories of ornithonyms appear in several early monuments. For instance, the *İrq Bitig* and the *Codex Cumanicus* contain the word *qaraguş* (black vulture); the *Ibn Muhanna Dictionary* records *qartal* (eagle), while Mahmud Kashgari’s *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* includes *laçın* (falcon). The lexicon of *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* is noteworthy for its richness and for comprising words belonging to various thematic groups. The dictionary, with its vast lexical treasury, devotes particular attention to animals, birds, insects, and other categories^[18]. In this respect, the *Book of Dede Korkut* is also a valuable source. Interestingly, in world traditions of naming, bird names are also used in anthroponymy. For example, *Qartal* (Eagle), *Laçın* (Falcon), *Durna* (Crane), *Tər lan* (Goshawk), *Kəklik* (Partridge), *Göyərçin* (Dove), *Turaç* (Francolin), *Tutu* (Parrot), *Sona* (Swan), and *Qumru* (Turtledove) are words that have transitioned from ornithonyms into anthroponyms. As bird names, they are capitalized only at the beginning of a sentence, but as personal names, they are capitalized in all contexts. In this way, these words retain their original meanings while

functioning as individualized names. *“A name is a word, and like all words, it is subject to the rules of language. Hence, it belongs to linguistics... However, proper names form specific systems within the language. Therefore, within the general laws of linguistics, they acquire specific features and generate their own regularities, about which little has been said in linguistics”*^[19]. In early Turkic traditions, male names were more frequently derived from predatory and wild animals and birds, whereas female names were based on peaceful, graceful, and aesthetically valued animals and birds^[18]. Scholarly works have also discussed the special role of the zoonymic lexicon in the formation of male and female names: *“The zoonyms participating in the creation of male and female personal names in Azerbaijani can be grouped into ornithonyms, wild animals, mythological beings, other living creatures, and words that, due to their meaning, are undesirable to be used as human names”*^[20]. Studies confirm that bird names are most frequently used in naming females. A name constitutes one of the socio-cultural achievements of humankind. It emerged during the process of historical development to satisfy social needs within the collective. Therefore, every name bears the signs, marks, and traces of history^[21]. The phenomenon of naming is present in all societies. *“Naming arose out of necessity”*^[22]. Bird names occupy a special place and role within the lexical-grammatical system of languages. They are abundantly represented in spoken language, folklore, and literary works. Bird names also occur in religious texts. One such example is the *Ababil* bird mentioned in the 105th surah of the Qur’an. When Abrahah, the ruler of Yemen, advanced upon Mecca with war elephants to destroy the Kaaba, by the command of God, a flock of Ababil birds came flying from the direction of the Red Sea, each carrying small stones of baked clay in their beaks and talons. The stones they dropped caused wounds on the soldiers’ bodies, leading to their death. There are even reports that during the closure of the Kaaba due to the coronavirus pandemic, Ababil birds were seen above it^[23]. In the folklore of various nations, there exist numerous works of different genres associated with birds. For instance, in legends such as *“The Hoopoe,” “The Dove,” “The Hophop,” “The Partridge,” “The Francolin,” “The Rooster and the Peacock,” “The Swan,” “The Yusuf-Nasib Bird,” “The Hudhud,” “The Owl,” “The Moth and the Flame,” “The Owl and the Peacock,” “The Snake and the Swallow,” “The Rose*

and the Nightingale” and many others, popular conceptions concerning birds are vividly represented. Undoubtedly, the emergence of such examples was primarily motivated by the people’s profound hatred of social injustice^[24].

In many languages, birds frequently appear in proverbs as figurative devices used to convey wisdom, moral judgments, and social observations. The semantic roles of these ornithonyms, investigated through their symbolic, connotative, and metaphorical layers, highlight their significance in both linguistic structures and cultural thought. Among the rich imagery employed in proverbs, bird names often stand out as meaningful and symbolic elements. Birds, admired for their beauty, behavior, and symbolic associations with freedom, wisdom, vigilance, and other qualities, have long fascinated humanity. The use of bird names in proverbs represents one of the most natural and powerful ways of expressing complex ideas in simple, memorable forms. In this respect, the lexicon of Turkic peoples is particularly rich in bird names. M. Gül, for instance, demonstrates through a study of Mahmud al-Kashgari’s *Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk* that while the text includes 272 animal names and 650 related concepts, bird names occur 88 times, with 62 distinct bird species being mentioned^[25]. Within the vast corpus of proverbs, ornithonymic proverbs occupy a special place due to their vivid imagery and symbolic power. Birds, as familiar and diverse elements of the natural world, are often employed in proverbs to characterize human traits, to warn against danger, or to express social norms. In proverbs, birds are not referred to solely in their zoological sense; rather, their presence frequently symbolizes abstract concepts or human qualities. Since ancient times, birds have functioned as symbolic figures in human culture, representing a wide spectrum of notions ranging from freedom and beauty to cunning and misfortune. Their appearance in proverbs is neither accidental nor ornamental, but rather enhances the metaphorical, symbolic, and emotional depth of expression.

Proverbs containing bird names serve to reinforce cultural values, transmit ethical norms, social wisdom, and ecological awareness across generations. The recognition of bird names sustains interest in proverbs across all ages. Such ornithonymic proverbs are used to depict moral values, encourage reflection, and promote respect for both nature and tradition. The incorporation of bird names in proverbs is thus both a linguistic and cultural phenomenon. By facilitating

the communication of universal truths, they help integrate human experience with the natural world. Understanding the significance of bird names in proverbs enables a deeper appreciation of the richness and artistry of the vernacular, while also contributing to the preservation of intangible cultural heritage.

Among proverbs, the general term “bird” itself is particularly frequent. Alongside the generic term, various specific bird names are also used as instances of metaphorization. It is evident that in addition to the general qualities of birds, each bird also possesses distinct attributes, which may be associated with men or women, respectively. Naturally, not all bird names undergo metaphorization; rather, those birds with specific and distinguishing qualities are more frequently employed. Some of these birds are compared according to their positive traits, while others are associated with negative characteristics, which form the basis for their metaphorization^[26]. One of the metaphorical expressions actively used in the language is “the language of birds”. This expression occurs both in colloquial speech and in literary works. For instance, let us consider an example from the medieval Azerbaijani poet Imadaddin Nasimi:

*No one can decipher Nasimi's words;
This is the language of birds-only Solomon understands it*^[27].

The linguist M. Adilov, in his research, notes that numerous legends exist in the East concerning Solomon Ibn David (the Prophet Solomon), who reigned from 965 to 928 B.C., emphasizing that this prophet was believed to understand the language of all animals and birds. The renowned Persian poet Farid al-Din Attar's philosophical poem *Mantiq al-Tayr* (*The Conference of the Birds*) is closely connected with this legend. Written on the basis of Sufi ideas and narratives, the poem's participants are birds who speak in their own “bird language.” In this context, the expression “bird language” not only refers to its literal meaning but also carries a symbolic dimension, denoting the mystical, allegorical language of the Sufi path. For those unfamiliar with Sufism, this language remained enigmatic, mysterious, and incomprehensible. Gradually, the phrase “bird language” came to be applied more generally to describe obscure, convoluted, or difficult modes of expression^[28]. In literary usage, the expression is most often employed to denote a difficult or cryptic language.

Another actively used metaphorical expression in the language is “bird's milk”. In Azerbaijani, as well as in the folklore of Turkic peoples more broadly, this expression signifies something miraculous, unattainable, or impossible. In reality, birds do not produce milk; hence, the phrase refers to “something nonexistent, difficult, or impossible to obtain.” Figuratively, it is employed to describe an exceptionally rare, precious, or incomparable blessing. “Thus, depending on the context, it can denote abundance and richness, or an exaggerated, unattainable desire. This expression is rooted in mythological thought and derives from folk beliefs and legends, acquiring a universal status as a symbol of impossibility”^[29].

Studies confirm that ornithonyms in Azerbaijani proverbs are employed to convey social statuses and behavioral models. The ornithonyms attested in Azerbaijani proverbs can be classified semantically into the following groups:

8.1. Domestic Birds (Hen, Rooster, Goose, Duck, etc.)

These birds are associated with daily life and agriculture, often symbolizing family, diligence, or security. For example:

Toyuq anasından süd görməyib (*The hen has never seen milk from its mother*).

Toyuq banlamasının düşər-düşməzi var (*The hen's crowing may bring fortune or misfortune*).

Toyuq bir su içir, bir də Allaha baxır (*The hen drinks water and looks to God*)^[30].

Xoruz ölmüş, gözü çöplükdə qalmış (*The rooster has died, but its eyes remain on the dungheap*).

Xoruz öz küllüyündə banlar (*The rooster crows only in its own yard*)^[31].

Xoruzsuz da sabah açılar (*The morning will dawn even without a rooster*)^[30].

Qaz uçdu, qarğa qondu (*The goose has flown, the crow has landed*).

Qaz vur qazan doldur, sərçədən nə olacaq? (*Strike the goose, fill the pot; what use is the sparrow?*)

Qaza atdım, qoza dəydi (I aimed at the goose but hit a walnut)^[30].

Ördək gəlib qaz olmaz, gəlin gəlib qız olmaz (A duck cannot become a goose, nor a bride a maiden).

Ördəyi su ilə qorxutmazlar (Ducks are not frightened with water)^[30].

8.2. Wild Birds (Crow, Nightingale, Eagle, Owl, Sparrow, etc.)

These birds typically symbolize behavior, vocal expression, freedom, foresight, or misfortune. For instance:

Bülbül gülü sevər, insan vətəni (The nightingale loves the rose; man loves his homeland).

Bülbül viranədən ötməz, bayquş viranədən gəlməz (The nightingale will not sing in ruins, and the owl will not leave them)^[30].

Qartal yumurtasından qarğa çıxmaz (An eagle's egg cannot produce a crow).

Qartal zirvədə, qarğa zibillikdə gəzər (The eagle soars on peaks, the crow roams the refuse)^[30].

Bayquş viranələri sevər (The owl loves ruins).

Bayquşun da dar olmasın qəfəsi (Even the owl should not be confined in a narrow cage).

Bayquşun ruzisi ayağında gedər (An owl's sustenance lies in its own feet)^[30].

Proverbs containing ornithonyms are rich in lexical meaning and imagery. Depending on the context, bird names may convey both positive and negative connotations. For example, the nightingale is associated positively with beauty, poetry, and love:

Bülbülə qızıl qəfəsdən kol dibi xoş olar (The nightingale prefers the bush to a golden cage).

Bülbülü qızıl qəfəsə salmışlar, "vay, vətən!" demiş (The nightingale, placed in a golden cage, still cried "Alas, my homeland!")^[30].

The eagle, in turn, symbolizes power, elevation, leadership, and foresight:

Qartal milçək tutmaz (The eagle does not catch flies).

Qartala dedilər: – Harda anadan olmusan?

Dedi: – Uca dağlarda! Dedilər: – Haraya uçursan? Dedi: – Uca dağlara! (They asked the eagle: Where were you born? It replied: On high mountains! They asked: Where do you fly? It replied: To high mountains!).

Qartala oq toxunmuş, oq yeləyin görcək "məna məndən oldu" demiş (When the eagle was pierced by an arrow and saw the feather, it said: "It was from me that it came")^[30].

The goose also carries positive associations, as reflected in the following proverbs:

Qaz lələgi qanun yazar (The goose feather writes the law).

Qaz tükündən nazbalış olar (A pillow is made from goose down)^[30].

By contrast, the crow is often attributed with negative qualities:

Qarğa bülbül olmaz, tülkü aslan (The crow will never be a nightingale, nor the fox a lion).

Qarğa çox bildiyindən tora düşər (The crow, thinking it knows much, falls into the snare).

Qarğa döşün çəkməklə qaz olmaz (A crow cannot become a goose by puffing its breast).

Qarğa gəldi kəklik yerisi yeriyə, öz yerisini də unutdu (The crow tried to walk like a partridge, but forgot its own gait)^[30].

The term "qarğa" ("crow") is one of the most frequently used bird names in Azerbaijani. A variety of lexical items have developed with its participation. For example, in scientific nomenclature, the following are noted: *qarğagözü* (a poisonous plant), *qarğaayağı* (an edible plant), *qarğasoganı* (a wild onion-like plant growing in fields and gardens), *qarğabükən* (a tropical tree), and *qarğasaqqızı* (a sticky substance exuded from the branches and stumps of plum, apricot, and cherry trees). Additionally, there exists the lexical-grammatical unit *qarğaburnu*. In the professional terminology of the Azerbaijani language, the term *qarğaburnu* is used to denote: (1) a hook-shaped iron piece used to lock doors from the inside (its shape resembling a crow's beak); (2) a specially designed pair of pincers for bending iron or similar materials; (3) a large pair of pincers used to tighten the ends of wires or nails^[32]. Ornithonyms are often employed in proverbs with negative connotations. For example, the crow frequently symbolizes misfortune and ugliness, as

illustrated in the following sayings:

Qarğadan qırğı olmaz (A crow never becomes a hawk).

Qarğa toğan olmaz (A crow cannot be a falcon).

Qarğa leşə qonar (A crow alights on carrion)^[30].

Qarğanı yüz il bəsləsən də tərən olmaz (Even if you raise a crow for a hundred years, it will never become a hawk)^[30].

Similarly, the owl conveys negativity, being associated with death and silence:

Bayquş başın tək istər (The owl prefers solitude).

Bayquş xarabalığı gülüstana dəyişməz (The owl does not exchange ruins for a rose garden).

Bayquş gündə üç sərçə yeyər (The owl eats three sparrows a day).

Bayquş necədirsə, şöhrəti də elədi (The owl's fame corresponds to its nature)^[30].

In Western traditions, the owl is considered wise, whereas in some Eastern cultures it is linked to mourning and death. The crow, with its black color and harsh voice, is often associated with misfortune, although in some proverbs it also symbolizes strength and resilience. In Azerbaijani, specific bird names carry distinct symbolic meanings: the nightingale (*bülbül*) a melodious, kind-hearted person; owl (*bayquş*) a bringer of misfortune, a malevolent person; sparrow (*sərçə*) an irresponsible individual; swallow (*qaranquş*) a benevolent, well-intentioned person; stork (*hacileylək*) a tall person; chicken (*toyuq*) a foolish person; rooster (*xoruz*) a quarrelsome, hasty person; goose (*qaz*) a naive or gullible person; eagle (*qartal*) a strong, proud individual; crow (*qarğa*) a malicious, gossipy person; broody hen (*qurt toyuq*) a sedentary or unadventurous person; the rooster at home, the hen outside a dominant figure at home, quiet elsewhere; pigeon (*göyərçin*) a harbinger of peace; peacock (*tovuz quşu*), a beautiful woman, etc.^[33].

The chicken symbolizes cowardice, weakness, and thoughtlessness, whereas the rooster conveys arrogance or loud, disruptive behavior:

Xoruz banlayanda gözünü yumar (The rooster closes its eyes while crowing)^[30].

Xoruzun vəzifəsi banlamaqdı (Crowing is the rooster's duty)^[30].

Similarly, sparrows convey insignificance:

Sərçə qazan doldurmaz, qaz vur, qazan dolsun (A sparrow cannot fill a pot; shoot a goose, and the pot will be full).

Sərçə nədir, bozbaşı nə olsun (What is a sparrow, that it could be a stew?)^[30].

Lexical-grammatical units derived from bird names serve as figurative expressions, representing both human character traits and certain social strata. Proverbs containing ornithonyms are powerful carriers of semantic meaning. Their richness lies in their ability to condense wisdom, observation, and emotion into a few words. The study of these meanings not only strengthens linguistic understanding but also illuminates the collective cultural psyche. Their metaphorical significance is rooted in culturally shared knowledge of birds' characteristics, rendering the proverbs vivid and connected. Ornithonymic proverbs further affirm the richness of onomastics.

Bird names frequently appear in proverbs because they embody recognizable and vivid traits that resonate with human experience. Through metaphor, bird names transform literal references into complex symbols representing personality, behavior, and social phenomena. Different bird species convey diverse meanings depending on the proverb. Bird names in proverbs simplify complex ideas by linking them to observable natural phenomena, facilitating comprehension and transmission across generations, and strengthening the human-nature connection.

The linguistic function of ornithonymic proverbs plays a decisive role in encapsulating human experiences and social wisdom. They allow the folk language to be appreciated as a dynamic and artistic medium of communication. Indeed, natural elements, including birds, serve as vital instruments in proverbs, an essential branch of folk literature, conveying life experience, worldview, and moral values in concise expressions. With their metaphorical weight, bird names effectively express various aspects of human life in proverbs.

Ornithonyms in proverbs serve a variety of symbolic functions. For example, the saying *Bülbülün çəkdiyi dil*

bəlasıdı (*The nightingale's song is a source of trouble*)^[30] refers to individuals who speak eloquently but lack caution and tend to prolong conversations unnecessarily. Similarly, *Qarğadan gözəl quş istədilər, balasını göstərdi* (*They asked the crow for a beautiful bird, and it showed them its chick*)^[30] conveys the idea that everyone considers their own child superior. Another proverb, *Qarğa özünü quş bilər, umac özünü aş bilər* (*The crow considers itself a bird, while the millet seed overestimates itself*)^[30], highlights the tendency of individuals to overestimate themselves, only to appear insignificant or unsuccessful later. In such metaphorical expressions, ornithonyms function not only as lexical units but also carry emotional and aesthetic nuances.

Proverbs reflect the history and culture of every people. Interestingly, although they have existed since ancient times, they continue to develop even today. Sometimes, the sayings of literary figures or prominent personalities become proverbs themselves. In this context, the Azerbaijani scholar and public figure, Honored Scientist (1974), member of the All-Union Soil Science Society, member of the All-Union Geographical Society, academic secretary of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (1952–1957), Doctor of Science in World University (USA), and a full member of the Royal Bibliographical Society of England, Hasan Aliyev (Director of the Institute of Geography, ANAS, 1968–1987) expressed the following view about birds at the level of a proverb: “*The world of birds is the most lively and poetic part of nature*”^[34].

Bird-related proverbs are widespread across various cultures. Examples include:

Russian: *Птица не летает, не подумав* (*A bird does not fly without thinking*).

Птицу узнают по её полёту (*One recognizes a bird by its flight*).

Птицы не сеют и не жнут, но всё же сыты (*Birds neither sow nor reap, yet they are full*).

Ossetian: *Фæрстæ ныгъ фæстæн æн быд крæфт æм ды цæгуырð æнæг* (*A bird does not live alone in the forest*).

Korean: *새가 내려앉은 곳에는 깃털이 남는* *ㄷ* (*Where a bird lands, its feathers remain*).

German: *Wenn du einen Vogel willst, baue zuerst sein Nest*.

So wie der Vogel zum Fliegen geschaffen ist,

ist der Mensch zur Arbeit geschaffen (*If you want a bird, first build its nest. Just as a bird is made to fly, a human is made for labor*).

Arabic: *بحكمته الإنسان يطير، بجناحيه الطائر يطير* (*Just as a bird flies with its own wings, a man flies with his wisdom*).

Azerbaijani: *Quş var ətin yeyərlər, quş var ət yedirdərlər* (*Some birds eat meat themselves; others make others eat it*).

Finnish: *Linnut rakentavat pesänsä yhdessä* (*Birds build their nest together*)^[34].

The use of ornithonyms in proverbs reflects the people's perception of nature and carries a national-cultural quality. Each bird has a specific place in cultural consciousness: for instance, the nightingale symbolizes love and art in classical poetry, the owl represents night, death, and sorrow, the crow stands for foolishness or misfortune, the rooster signals authority and warning, the parrot indicates repetition or superficial knowledge, and the sparrow represents simplicity and ordinary people. In this respect, ornithonyms function not only as lexical labels but also as ethnolinguistic signs.

Ornithonymic proverbs often function as fixed expressions. They are lexically and syntactically stable and convey idiomatic meanings. For instance:

Qaranquş səhər müjdəsi gətirər (*A good person speaks well*).

Qaranquş gəldi-gedərdi, sənə qalan boz sərçə olacaq (*Do not trust unfaithful people; appreciate those close to you*).

Qaraquş sümüyü ölçər, udar (*Be cautious in every action*)^[30].

Here, it is recommended to be cautious in every matter.

The stability of meanings ensures the long-term survival of these units in collective memory. Bird names have been transformed into symbolic tools among the people to express concepts related to individuals and society. Bird names that create positive imagery reflect the desires and ideals of the community. These nuances are based on representations of birds shaped through societal observation and experience. The same ornithonym can carry different semantic nuances in different contexts. For example, although the owl is mostly associated with death and silence, it is sometimes presented as a wise creature; the rooster primarily

symbolizes awakening and alerting, yet it can also represent a boastful, meaningless speaker. These symbols are closely linked to the collective mentality and cultural memory of the people.

Certain bird images are firmly established in folk memory, and their semantics remain stable over time. For instance, the crow has represented a negative image for centuries, while the nightingale has consistently been a positive symbol associated with beauty, love, and music. This stability contributes to the enduring presence of these proverbs in collective memory.

The cultural and semantic load of ornithonyms in proverbs is significant. Bird names occupy an important place not only in language but also in culture and mythology. Their semantic features are closely tied to the cultural context. In Turkish culture, the eagle symbolizes state and power; in Eastern poetry, the nightingale represents love and inspiration; in many cultures, if not all, the dove is a symbol of peace and sanctity. From this perspective, the semantic analysis of ornithonyms also carries ethnolinguistic content. Culturally conditioned meanings enrich the lexical value of ornithymic proverbs, demonstrating how language and worldview are intertwined. Such expressions form part of the phraseological system of the language, transforming them into stable lexical units.

Proverbs containing ornithonyms exhibit deep and interesting stylistic features. Bird names stylistically reflect human character, social behavior, or life events through metaphorical comparison. For example: *Qaraquşa xeyir öz dimdiyindən çatar* (Good comes to the blackbird from its own beak) – refers to diligent people who do not rely on others' help; *Qaz ayağını sudan çəkməz* (The goose does not lift its foot from the water) – refers to stubborn or foolish individuals; *Qaranquş gəlməklə yaz olmaz* (The arrival of a single swallow does not make spring)—indicates that a single positive sign does not change the whole situation. In these examples, metaphor, association, and logical comparison create strong imagery.

Stylistic devices such as irony, hyperbole, and antithesis in proverbs are reinforced through ornithonyms. The stylistic contrast and humorous tone they convey reflect the social critique and observational skills of the people. Proverbs containing ornithonyms also attract attention in terms of phonetic style and harmony, and the use of alliteration, assonance, and

sound patterning adds an additional emotional effect.

Qarğanın səsi çıxanda qar gələr (When the crow caws, snow will come).

Qarğanı qırqovul deyə yeyir (They eat the crow as if it were a partridge).

Qaraquş atdığıni bilər, vurduğunu bilməz (The blackbird knows what it throws, but not what it strikes).

Qaraquş deyər: Dayım sar olmasaydı, qoyunu caynağımda qaldırardım (The blackbird says: 'If my uncle had not been sickly, I would have raised the sheep with my claw')^[30].

In these examples, the repetition of the /q/ and /ğ/ sounds creates phonetic harmony.

Xoruz çox olan yerdə səhər tez açılar (Where there are many roosters, the morning rises early).

Xoruz elə xoruzdu, nə qocası, nə cavanı?! (A rooster is a rooster, neither old nor young!)

Xoruz getdi, dava bitdi (The rooster is gone, the quarrel ends).

Xoruz olmasa, səhər açılmaz (If there is no rooster, morning will not break)^[30].

Here, the /x/, /q/, and /s/ sounds establish rhythmic fluency. Such phonoaesthetic features enhance the memorability and emotional impact of proverbs. Ornithonyms constitute an important stylistic layer of the folklore lexicon. These names express not only living species but also realms of imagination, desires, fears, and sometimes religious or mythological values. The frequency of ornithonym usage and its contextual role determine its stylistic significance.

The use of bird names in proverbs imparts metaphorical depth, phonetic delicacy, and rhetorical power. These expressions not only convey folk wisdom but also reflect the poetic and philosophical worldview of the people who created them and passed them down through generations. Although numerous studies have been conducted in the field of onomastics, there remains a need for research specifically focused on poetic onomastic units. The stylistic features of proverbs containing ornithonyms provide insight into their artistry and inventiveness.

Ornithonyms in proverbs are rarely used in a literal sense. Their connotative meanings enrich the lexical con-

tent of the proverb: these meanings are highly dependent on cultural context and are deeply rooted in the collective imagination. Proverbs containing ornithonyms often rely on figurative language. Such proverbs demonstrate lexical economy: they use few words but convey complex ideas. Birds, due to their universal familiarity and symbolic depth, provide ideal lexical tools for conveying wisdom.

Ornithonyms in proverbs are linguistically and culturally rich expressions that showcase the power of lexical choice. Bird names in these proverbs are not merely labels but lexemes loaded with figurative, symbolic, and emotional significance. The stability, connotative depth, and cultural relevance of ornithonyms in proverbs render them fascinating and original instruments for expressing wisdom and artistic language.

8.3. Stylistic and Phonetic Aspects

Proverbs containing ornithonyms often employ irony, hyperbole, and antithesis. The stylistic contrast and humor convey social critique and observational acuity. Phonetically, these proverbs feature alliteration, assonance, and sound harmony, enhancing their emotional effect:

Qarğanın səsi çıxanda qar gələr (When the crow caws, snow will come).

Qarğanı qırqovul deyə yeyir (They eat the crow, thinking it is a partridge).

Qaraquş atdığıni bilər, vurduğunu bilməz (The blackbird knows what it throws, but not what it strikes).

Qaraquş deyər: Dayım sar olmasaydı, qoyunu caynağında qaldırdım (The blackbird says: If my uncle hadn't been a fool, I would have lifted the sheep with my claw)^[30].

Here, the repetition of consonants creates phonetic harmony.

Xoruz çox olan yerdə səhər tez açılar (Where there are many roosters, morning comes early).

Xoruz elə xoruzdu, nə qocası, nə cavanı?! (A rooster is just a rooster; neither old nor young!)

Xoruz getdi, dava bitdi (The rooster is gone, the quarrel is over).

Xoruz olmasa, səhər açılmaz (Without a rooster, the morning will not break)^[30].

Such phono-poetic features enhance memorability and emotional impact.

Ornithonyms thus form a significant stratum of folkloric vocabulary, expressing not only living species but also imagination, desires, fears, and occasionally religious or mythological values. The frequency and contextual role of ornithonyms determine their stylistic importance.

Ornithonyms rarely function literally in proverbs; their connotative meanings enrich the lexical content and are deeply rooted in cultural imagination. Proverbs with ornithonyms mainly rely on figurative language, demonstrating lexical economy by conveying complex ideas succinctly. Birds, due to their universal familiarity and symbolic depth, provide an ideal lexical medium for transmitting wisdom.

8.4. Grammatical Features of Ornithonyms

Ornithonyms also perform functional roles in grammatical structures. Morphologically, they appear in singular and plural forms:

Qaraquş milçək tutmaz (The blackbird does not catch flies)^[30].

Qarğalar mənim toyuğumdur, yumurtasını görmərəm (The crows are my chickens, yet I cannot see their eggs)^[30].

Bird names primarily appear in the nominative case, but they also occur in possessive, dative, accusative, and ablative cases:

Toyuğun başı kəsildəndə də gözü eşənəkdə olar (Even when the chicken's head is cut off, its eye will still be on the fly) (Possessive)^[30].

Xoruz quyruğu da yükü/Xoruz quyruğu yük olmaz (The rooster also has a burden on its tail/The tail is no burden for the rooster) (Dative)^[30].

Toyuğu bir xalvar buğdanın içinə salsan, yenə eşələnmayindən qalmaz (Even if you put the chicken into a sack of wheat, it will still scratch its way out) (Accusative)^[30].

Sərçədən qorxan darı əkməz (He who fears the sparrow will not sow millet) (Ablative)^[30].

Often, ornithonyms are accompanied by adjectives such as “ac” (hungry), “ala” (pied), or “alıcı” (greedy),

which play a key role in defining the bird:

Ac toyuq özünü taxıl bazarında görər (A hungry hen sees itself in the grain market).

Ac toyuq yuxuda darı görər (A hungry hen dreams of millet).

Ala qarğa çox bildigündən tələyə düşər (A speckled crow falls into a trap because it knows too much).

The morphological flexibility of ornithonyms enhances stylistic possibilities, allowing for antithesis and comparison:

Sərçə bülbul sədasın verməz (A sparrow cannot produce the nightingale's song).

Sərçənin cib-cibindən toyuğun qaqqıldaması yaxşıdı (The clucking of a hen is better than the chirping of a sparrow from its tiny pocket)^[30].

Ornithonyms also fulfill syntactic functions as subjects, objects, predicates, and adverbials:

Subject: *Toyuq yumurtasına görə qaqqıldar (The hen clucks because of her egg).*

8.5. Sentence Types and Ornithonyms

Various sentence models are observed in proverbs containing ornithonyms. Simple declarative sentences frequently feature bird names. For example:

Toyuq hininə dadanan tülkünün dərisi boğazından çıxar (The fox that tastes the hen's coop will choke on its own skin)^[30].

Şahin ilə dəvə ovlanmaz (You cannot hunt with a hawk and a camel)^[30].

In proverbs composed of complex sentences, the activity of ornithonyms is also evident:

Xoruzun saqqalı ağarsa da, bahası on dörd şahıdı (Even if the rooster's beard turns white, its value is fourteen shahs)^[30].

As seen, comparison is used in subordinate clauses of complex sentences with ornithonyms. Conditional subordinate clause structures also occur in ornithonym-containing proverbs. For example:

Xoruz silkələnsə, bir çəngə tük olar, dəvə

silkələnsə, bir ulağa yük olar (If the rooster shakes, only a handful of feathers will fall; if the camel shakes, a whole load will tumble off)^[30].

Toy da olsa, toyuğun vayıdı, vay da olsa, toyuğun vayıdı (Even if it is a wedding, it is the chicken that suffers; even if it is a lament, it is still the chicken that bears the pain)^[30].

This diversity demonstrates that ornithonyms possess extensive functional potential not only lexically but also grammatically. Thus, proverbs containing ornithonyms represent one of the richest and most functional expressive tools in a language, both in content and grammatical structure. Bird names perform various syntactic roles, are enriched with morphological markers, and carry semantic weight across different sentence models. Such grammatical analysis confirms the dynamic and creative nature of the language.

Proverbs with bird names are rich in metaphor, cultural wisdom, and linguistic creativity. These expressions reflect not only the significance of birds in folklore and traditional knowledge but also how language conveys human relations, social values, and cognitive classification through familiar ornithonymic depictions. In proverbs, bird names do not function merely as objects; they enrich content and enhance the comprehension, moral, and literary value of the text. They generate multilayered meaning in concise, memorable expressions and hold a prominent place in the cognitive system of people.

Birds have had symbolic importance in human culture since ancient times. Their names convey meanings ranging from freedom and beauty to foolishness and omens. Proverbs, as consolidated units of folk wisdom, often employ these names to convey life lessons succinctly and memorably. Bird names enrich the figurativeness and emotional tone of proverbs, adding stylistic and rhetorical value. They ensure the continued relevance and impact of proverbs. Research confirms that bird names are a potent linguistic resource in the formation of proverbs. Through familiar and vivid natural imagery, they help convey complex human experiences and moral reflections. Whether used symbolically, didactically, or ironically, ornithonyms enrich folk wisdom and ensure the enduring relevance of proverbs across generations.

Birds, in human perception of nature, function both as living beings and symbolic entities. Their names in proverbs

deepen content, enhance figurativeness, and increase the persuasive power of the expression. Through birds, diverse aspects of human life, love, friendship, fear, courage, etc., are conveyed with concrete, easily memorable imagery. This further elevates the significance of proverbs not only as linguistic expressions but also as cultural heritage.

9. Conclusion

Proverbs containing ornitonyms constitute an essential part of the artistic and philosophical thinking of the world, including Turkic peoples. Such proverbs are noteworthy not only for their semantic content but also for their poetic expression, figurativeness, and stylistic richness. They expand the artistic possibilities of language and aesthetically preserve the culture and worldview of the people. Research demonstrates that proverbs with ornitonyms occupy a significant place in the lexical-semantic system of the language. Bird names in proverbs function not only as words but also as cultural and semantic carriers. Their lexical properties semantic depth, metaphorical quality, connotation, and idiomaticity, reflect the people's thinking and worldview.

The study of the lexical-semantic functions of ornitonyms is important both linguistically and folkloristically. Bird names in proverbs serve as lexical units loaded with deep symbolic, connotative, and metaphorical meaning. Their semantic features express the collective thinking, worldview, and cultural values of the people. Semantic analysis shows that ornitonyms play a critical role in transforming language into a medium for conveying emotional, philosophical, and social meaning. The use of bird names in proverbs also enhances their didactic and communicative functions. Expressions enriched with natural elements are easier for children and youth to remember and internalize. This makes ornitonymic proverbs an invaluable tool for transmitting, preserving, and sustaining intergenerational knowledge and experience.

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