



Loss of Life and Return to Life in Selkup Folklore

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- ▶ An interdisciplinary situational approach is proposed as one of the modeling strategies, when the methods and resources of various disciplines are combined.
- ▶ An important step in the analysis is the identification of ethnolinguistic situations, which are understood as a combination of conditions that create a certain communicative environment, the meaning of which is interpreted by means of language and culture.

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- ▶ The “ethno-” component is associated with the description of a certain ethnic group, but does not prevent typological comparisons.
- ▶ An ethnolinguistic situation is based on the original text. Language contributes to detailed interpretation of the meaning of the situation and helps establishing borders.

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- ▶ According to Dell Hymes (1964), it is necessary “to investigate directly the use of language in contexts of situation so as to discern patterns proper to speech activity, patterns which escape separate studies of grammar, of personality, of religion, of kinship and the like, each abstracting from the patterning of speech activity as such into some other frame of reference. Such an approach cannot take linguistic form, a given code, or speech itself, as frame of reference. It must take as context a community, investigating its communicative habits as a whole, so that any given use of channel and code takes its place as but part of the resources upon which the members of the community draw.”

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- ▶ The essence of the interdisciplinary situational approach is that folklore and ethnographic texts are analyzed for the presence of ethnolinguistic situations, the components of which are identified and interpreted using the methodological apparatus of various disciplines.
- ▶ As a rule, an extra-linguistic situation is associated with a speech event or a speech situation.
- ▶ Each ethnolinguistic situation presupposes participants and is based on their activity.

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- ▶ In folklore, the ethnolinguistic situation correlates with a motif, understood as a segment-event, a relatively independent, complete and relatively elementary segment of the narrative.
- ▶ The motif acts as an organizational moment of the plot movement and brings its meaning to the content of the plot, and is also a distinctive feature or dominant idea of a literary composition (Kim 2015: 28).

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- ▶ Combining data from different disciplines in understanding the ethnolinguistic situation, we get a special interdisciplinary unit that allows us to interpret folklore in the widest possible way, as well as to model a picture of the world on its basis.
- ▶ The next stage of the analysis is the search for similar situations in other texts, their comparison, identification of options and embedding them in a certain fragment of the picture of the world.
- ▶ The study can be continued in a typological way, using material from related and unrelated peoples to build a typology of ethnolinguistic situations.

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- ▶ Fairy-tale-based folktales rarely work without instances of loss of life. It is legitimate to consider them an integral part of larger conflict situations at the stage of destructive resolution. There are a variety of ways of bringing them to fruition within the overall framework.
- ▶ The individual components of a situation include the perpetrator, the cause, the victim, the mode/action, and possibly the result.
- ▶ In the Itya epic (Tuchkova-W-Nagy 2015), the active participants are Itya, Pönegese or any other character showing hostility.
- ▶ The causes of violence vary depending on the plot: threats or hostile intrigues, e.g., changing the essence of a participant (grandmother turns out to be a one-eyed monster), betrayal, aggression, etc.

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- ▶ Violent methods include dismemberment, beheading, swallowing, burning, drowning, cutting, tearing the body apart, and stabbing.
- ▶ Swallowing is usually associated with Pönegese and corresponds to cannibalism.
- ▶ In one fairy tale, Tomnenka (a hostile supernatural being) kills Natenka (human being, girl) by sticking a grass root (variant: nail) in her ear, a special method, characteristic only of this plot and characters (Очерки по селькупскому языку, 1993).
- ▶ For It'a, deceptive manipulations can be a special method of bringing about the self-destruction of the enemy.
- ▶ There is a double murder, for example, It'a stabbed Pönegese's daughter and boiled her in a cauldron; It'a killed the cannibal with a knife and burned him at the stake.

Example of situational analysis from the text “It’a and Al’diga” (Tuchkova-W-Nagy 2015)

- ▶ The participants: It’a, Aldiga (It’a’s grandmother), devil-old man (Pönegese)
- ▶ The cause of the conflict: P’s aggression, his intention to eat I and A
- ▶ The victim to be: It’a + Aldiga
- ▶ The real victim: Pönegese
- ▶ The action: beheading of P. by It’a
- ▶ The instrument: It’a’s ax
- ▶ The result: elimination of the threat from P.
Aldiga: “Kutymnei aza larymbukvendzei”.

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- ▶ Proxy punishment takes place in some texts, for example, in the text “Ičakyčika” the conflict between Iča and the devil (Pönegese) is resolved by the action of Iča's rein-deer, who trampled on the devil.
- ▶ In the text about the Hazel Grouse-Man, the Tsar ordered his people to cut into pieces the father of Grouse because he dared to propose the marriage between Tsar's daughter and his son-Grouse (Tales of Narym-Selkups, 1996:143).

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- ▶ There are only a few ways of coming back to life, and they are rarely encountered.
- ▶ In the structure of the situation, the action is central, e.g., Yompa's wife revived his grandmother by assembling the bones on her toe and kicking them; the son-bull assembled the pieces of his father's body on the ashes and trampled on them (Tales of Narym-Selkups, 1996).

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- ▶ In addition to the active participant and the dead, a drug may be included: living water or *putur* ointment. Then the action is chosen accordingly - either anointing or sprinkling.
- ▶ The situation of reviving by rocking (*kukyqo*) in the cradle has a special structure: this is how the daughter of the Sun revived her husband-Moon (Мифология селькупов, 2004).

In conclusion:

- ▶ Despite the differences between the actions in the two classes of situations, they are united by the idea of transition from one state to another.
- ▶ The study was carried out in an interdisciplinary spirit, focusing on folklore textual units. An ethnocultural analysis of the respective situational components makes it possible to reveal the details important for further typological research into the regional folklore of Siberia.
- ▶ **Thank you for your attention!**

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