

The Significance of Studying Folklore in Different Cultures from Linguistic Point of View

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Abstract

This article illustrates the significance of studying folklore in different cultures, gives brief information about the background of folklore as a community heritage. Moreover, it is investigated some prompt and effective methods in studying the folklore in different languages from a cultural perspective. Main differences between Western and Asian folklore from a linguistic and cultural point of view are also analyzed with examples.

Keywords: folklore, believes, customs, Western folklore, Asian folklore, comparative analysis, tradition.

Folklore (the word) the generic term under which the traditional believes, customs, stories, songs and sayings current among backward peoples, or retained by the uncultured classes of more advanced peoples, and comprehended and included. ... In short, it covers everything which makes part of the mental equipment of the folk as distinguished from their technical skill. It is not the form of the plough which excites the attention of the folklorist, but the rites practised by the ploughman when putting it into the soil ... [1,130]

Studying folklore is important for several reasons. First, it provides insight into the cultural heritage of a community, region, or society. Folklore encompasses the traditional beliefs, customs, stories, music, and art of a people, and studying it helps preserve and understand these cultural expressions.

Second, folklore studies help in understanding the psychological and sociological aspects of a community. Folklore often reflects the collective consciousness, values, and fears of a society and studying it can offer insights into the common experiences and struggles of a group of people.

Furthermore, folklore is an essential part of oral tradition and has been used to pass down knowledge and values from generation to generation. By studying folklore, we can better understand the ways in which information and wisdom have been transmitted and preserved throughout history.

Studying folklore in different languages from a cultural perspective can be a rich and rewarding experience. Here are some effective methods for studying folklore in different languages from a cultural perspective:

1. **Language Proficiency:** It is essential to have a strong grasp of the language in which the folklore is written or spoken. This might involve language learning, immersion programs, or working with language experts to ensure accurate understanding of the nuances and subtleties of the language.

2. Comparative Analysis: Comparative analysis involves studying similar folklore motifs, themes, or narratives across different languages and cultures. This can provide insight into the universal themes and variations within different cultural contexts.
3. Fieldwork and Interviews: Conducting fieldwork and interviews with native speakers of the language can provide invaluable cultural context and understanding. Direct engagement with the community can offer insights into the significance of folklore and its role in shaping cultural identity.
4. Contextualization: Understanding the historical, social, and geographical context of the folklore is crucial. This involves studying the cultural, religious, and social practices that influence the creation and transmission of folklore within a specific language community.
5. Interdisciplinary Approach: Utilizing an interdisciplinary approach by integrating elements of anthropology, history, linguistics, and literature can provide a comprehensive understanding of folklore within its cultural context.
6. Ethical Considerations: It is important to approach the study of folklore with respect for the cultural traditions and the individuals within the language community. Ethical considerations should guide the collection, interpretation, and dissemination of folklore material.
7. Translation and Interpretation: Translating folklore while preserving its cultural and linguistic nuances is a complex but crucial task. It requires a deep understanding of both the source and target cultures to maintain the integrity of the folklore.
8. Digital Resources: Utilizing digital resources such as online archives, multimedia platforms, and digital libraries can provide access to a wide range of folklore materials in different languages, making cross-cultural comparisons easier.

By employing these methods, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of folklore in different languages, and its impact on culture, tradition, and identity.

The main differences between Western and Asian folklore from a linguistic and cultural point of view are:

1. Language and oral tradition: Western folklore is predominantly passed down through European languages such as English, French, German, and others, while Asian folklore is transmitted through a multitude of languages including Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Hindi, Urdu, and many others. This results in different linguistic characteristics and storytelling techniques in the folklore of each region.
2. Cultural themes and motifs: Western folklore often features motifs such as knights, dragons, fairies, and witches, while Asian folklore may include themes such as dragons, spirits, demons, and ancestral worship. The different cultural settings and belief systems give rise to unique narrative elements in the folklore of each region.
3. Oral storytelling traditions: In Western folklore, oral storytelling traditions often revolve around individual heroism and quests, while in Asian folklore, there is a greater emphasis on family and community values, as well as the interconnectedness of nature and the spirit world.
4. Influence of religion and philosophy: Western folklore is often influenced by Christian, Greco-Roman, and Celtic mythologies, while Asian folklore is shaped by religious and philosophical traditions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Shintoism, leading to distinct moral and spiritual lessons embedded in the stories.

These differences in language, cultural themes, oral traditions, and religious influences contribute to the diverse and rich tapestry of Western and Asian folklore. Overall, the study of folklore is important for preserving cultural heritage, understanding human experience, and contributing to various academic disciplines.

The list of used literature

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