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FOLK SAYINGS IN THE CONTEXT OF ELECTRONIC INFORMATION CULTURE

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Applicant: **Gunay Matlab Yusifzada**

ABSTRACT

of the dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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The dissertation completed at the 'Modern Folklore' Department of the Institute of Folklore of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences.

Scientific advisor: Doctor of Philology, Professor
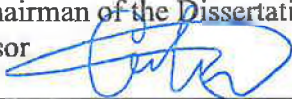**Fuzuli Khayrulla Gozalov**

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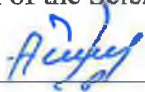Chairman of the Dissertation Council: Doctor of Philology, Professor

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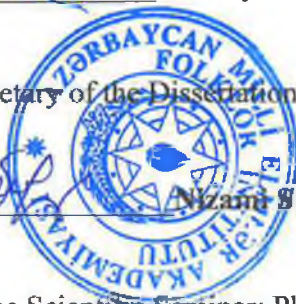Scientific Secretary of the Dissertation Council: PhD in Philology

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_____   **Afzaladdin Dagbeyi Asgarov**

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DISSERTAION

Topicality and degree of using of the theme. One of the current and significant directions in contemporary folkloristics is the study of folklore creativity and activity that emerge within the electronic environment. In this context, the concept of "electronic information culture" encompasses theoretical foundations such as the "electronic environment," "virtual folklore," and "internet folklore." These terms have been adopted as part of the conceptual framework, and the newly emerging folklore phenomena within this domain have become subjects of scholarly investigation.

One of the main directions of folkloristics as a scholarly discipline is the systematic study and analysis of contemporary folklore examples. In this context, the thematic and ideological features of folk sayings as products of collective creativity as well as their characteristic aspects in terms of content and form, have been examined from various perspectives. Significant research has been conducted on the collection of traditional folklore samples, their origin, and semantic analysis. Although modest in size, folk sayings stand out for their rich content and hold a special place within the system of national and spiritual values. These anonymous creations have been transmitted from generation to generation over time and have survived to the present day. In the context of advancing information and communication technologies, these sayings have re-emerged in the internet environment with new forms and content, acquiring specific features and undergoing transformation.

One of the main objectives of this research is to examine the presence of folk sayings in the internet environment as examples of modern folklore, to explore how they spread and develop in this digital space, and to analyze the semantic and functional features of the new examples that have emerged. Unlike classical folklore, the dissemination and transmission of folk sayings in the digital environment occur more rapidly and on a much broader scale. These features not only highlight the relevance of the topic but also

necessitate new research approaches to this area of oral folk literature. In this context, the presence and usage of folk sayings on the internet have become subjects of academic analysis. A comparative study of traditional and virtual folklore requires a complex and multi-layered approach. Thanks to the opportunities presented by information and communication technologies, sayings that have been transformed into the internet space have been systematically and comparatively investigated. These studies demonstrate that the development of folklore in the digital environment contributes to its continual renewal and enrichment in terms of content. In the current stage characterized by the rapid advancement of the internet, the increasing number of social media users, and the digitalization of communication platforms the preservation and transformation of folklore within this digital space must be considered a natural and inevitable process.

Within the framework of contemporary folkloristics, one of the primary research directions is the analysis of folklore-based examples emerging in the internet environment, the identification of their distinguishing features compared to oral folklore, and the study of the semantic and structural transformations undergone by such sayings. The systematic investigation of virtual folklore began to gain relevance in the late 20th century, largely as a result of the development of internet technologies.

In particular, the rapid technological progress and the expansion of social communication observed in the 21st century have led to the emergence of new forms of folklore. In folk sayings formed under these conditions, while continuity with tradition is often maintained, in some cases a departure from tradition occurs, accompanied by new content and enriched perspectives. These transformations are significant in that they illustrate how classical folklore continues to exist in the modern digital context and how it is aesthetically and artistically reconfigured.

Therefore, the comparative study of the characteristics of traditional and virtual folklore, and the identification of their common and divergent features, constitute one of the key scholarly

tasks facing modern Azerbaijani folkloristics. The parallel analysis of folk sayings that exist in both classical and digital environments further highlights their relevance in the contemporary era.

In the current context of intensified globalization, it is essential to present folk sayings to broader audiences and to ensure their proper representation within the international folklore context. In this regard, Azerbaijani folk sayings disseminated through the internet should be analyzed in comparison with the folklore examples of other nations, and the artistic-aesthetic potential, thematic richness, and symbolic value of our folklore images presented on social media platforms must be demonstrated on a scholarly basis. Such comparative studies not only increase global scholarly interest in Azerbaijani folklore but also position it as one of the key factors ensuring the uniqueness and continuity of our national culture in a globalized world.

Concerning the level of scholarly exploration of the topic within Azerbaijani folkloristics, it should be noted that the present dissertation is aimed at investigating contemporary folklore examples in the context of electronic information culture, with a focus on identifying the functions of folklore and the mechanisms of its transformation. In this direction, the research of Hikmat Guliyev holds particular significance for the study of internet folklore, its theoretical and methodological foundations, and the folklore processes occurring in Azerbaijani-language virtual spaces. His analyses, conducted on the basis of modern philosophical and ideological approaches, have contributed to the formation of a scientific foundation in this field. However, it is evident that in previous years, no systematic academic research had been conducted specifically on the topic of folk sayings within the context of virtual folklore—particularly in electronic environments. Taking this gap into account, the dissertation investigates folk sayings within the framework of electronic information culture that is, through the analysis of examples created, disseminated, and transformed in the internet environment.

In this research, each folklore example taken from or analyzed within the internet environment is examined comparatively with its traditional counterparts, and their distinctive features in terms of form and content are identified. Within this process, the structural elements and semantic content have been systematically analyzed, and the digital transformation of folklore has been explained on a theoretical basis.

In this research, the scientific findings of studies conducted in various countries around the world have been utilized as a theoretical foundation, with reference made to both traditional folk sayings and modern folklore texts that have emerged and evolved within the internet environment. Significant scholarly contributions in this field particularly the valuable work and expertise of scholars such as Mikhail Alekseevsky[1], Vera Rukomoinikova[2], De Vos Gail Arlene[3], Alan Dundes[4], Simon Bronner[5], Trevor Blank[6], Mehmet Emin Bars[7],

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[1] Alekseyevsky, M. D. (2015). *Is it Internet in Folklore or Internet Folklore?* (Trans. by Atilla Bagcı). In *Contemporary Folkloristics and Virtual Reality. International Journal of Turkic World Cultural Studies*, 1 (1), 199–219.

[2] Rukomoynikova, V. P. (2004). *Virtual Folklore: Pros and Cons.* Monograph. Yoshkar-Ola. 128 pages. Rukomoynikova, V. P. (2006). *Amateur Creativity of Internet Users as a Post-Folklore Phenomenon.* In *Proceedings of the First All-Russian Congress of Folklorists*, Vol. 3, Moscow: State Republican Center of Russian Folklore, p. 289–297.

[3] De Vos, G. A. (2018). *Folklore and the Internet.* In *Netlore* (Trans. by Nurulhude Baykal), Ankara: Geleneksel Publications, p. 9–14.

Dundes, A. (1998). *Who is the Folk?* (Trans. by Metin Ekici). *Millî Folklor Journal*, (37), p. 139–153.

[4] Dundes, A. (2003). *Folklore: Semiotics and/or Psychoanalysis* (Collection of Articles), Moscow: Eastern Literature, RAS. 283 p.

[5] Bronner, S. J. (2009). *Digitizing and Virtualizing Folklore.* In *Folklore and the Internet* (Ed. T. J. Blank), Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, p. 21–66.

[6] Blank, T. J. (2009). *Toward a Conceptual Framework for the Study of Folklore and the Internet.* In *Folklore and the Internet: Vernacular Expression in a Digital World*, Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, p. 1–20.

[7] Bars, M. E. (2018). *Internet Folklore: Netlore. International Journal of Language, Literature and Folklore Studies*, p. 160–179.

Ahmet Ozgur Guvenc[8], Fuzuli Bayat[9], Hikmat Guliyev[10], among others have been extensively cited.

Object and Subject of the Research. The main object of the research is the proverbs and sayings that emerge in the virtual environment. In this context, the new proverbs and folklore-like texts formed in the internet environment are the focus of the study. At the same time, during the research, various digitized folklore examples that appear in the internet environment, including image-based folklore texts, photos, and memes, have also been analyzed.

The subject of the research is the analysis of the content and form of the proverbs that emerge in virtual folklore. Identifying the features that distinguish these proverbs from verbal folklore, examining the changes they undergo in the process of manifestation and embodiment, and analyzing the new trends emerging in the contemporary era are the main research directions.

Aims and Objectives of the Research. The main aim of the research is to investigate the proverbs and folklore-like texts that emerge in the internet environment. To achieve this aim, the following objectives are set to be accomplished in the dissertation:

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[8] Guvenc, A. O. (2014). *A Suggested Term for Internet Folklore: E-folklore. Journal of the Institute of Social Sciences of Atatürk University*, No. 18, p. 31–46.

[9] Bayat, F. (2018). *From Folklore to Post-Folklore*. In *Folkloristics: Problems and Studies*, Baku: Dede Gorgud, No. 2, p. 39–51. Bayat, F. (2017). *Some Issues of Contemporary Folklore. Institute of Folklore, Dede Gorgud*, No. 1, p. 46–54. Bayat, F. (2004). *Folklore in the Paradigm of the Socio-Economic and Cultural Ecology of the 21st Century*. Baku: *Dede Gorgud*, No. 4, p. 56–64. Bayat, F. (2018) *The Transformation and Change of Folklore in the Internet Environment. Folklore Studies*, No. 2(4), p. 8–19.

[10] Guliyev, H. (2018). *Virtual Environment and Folklore: Tradition and Communication*. Baku: Sabah, 253 pages. Guliyev, H. (2019). *The Problem of Anonymity in Internet Folklore. Dede Gorgud*, No. II, p. 81–93. Guliyev, H. (2017). *Folklore Processes and the Image of Albert Einstein in the Virtual Communication Environment. Dede Gorgud*, 1, p. 99–116. Guliyev, H. (2018). *Folklore and the Issue of Orality in the Virtual Communication Environment. Young Researcher*, IV, No. 2, p. 151–157. Guliyev, H. (2018). *Virtual Environment and Folklore: Tradition and Communication*. Baku: Sabah, 253 p.

− To examine the theoretical and methodological features of folklore existing in the internet environment;

− To analyze the semantic features of the proverbs formed in the virtual environment and determine the aspects that distinguish them from classical folklore;

− To identify the means and forms of manifestation of the proverbs present in the internet environment;

− To determine the main advantages achieved in the depiction and presentation of national and spiritual values and traditions in the proverbs of classical folklore that have spread to the internet;

− To identify the transformation directions and dissemination forms of proverbs in virtual folklore, to conduct a comparative analysis of examples in both folklore types, and to examine them along with their equivalents;

− To clarify the significance of new shades and different directions in the proverbs formed in the internet environment and analyze the stylistic uniqueness these examples bring to literary and artistic thought.

Methods of the research. The methodological direction of the research is based on theoretical concepts and the conclusions of researchers regarding the analysis of the relationships and features between classical and internet folklore. Research that focuses on explaining the transformation of proverbs into the new environment against the backdrop of the widespread use of internet folklore and information-communication technologies forms the core of this research framework. This dissertation primarily uses comparative and systematic analysis methods. Comparative research also helps to identify the existing differences or developments between internet folklore and classical folklore, providing the opportunity to examine more detailed factors and observe the development of common features.

The main provisions for defense. The main provisions defended in the dissertation regarding the study of proverbs in the context of electronic information culture are as follows:

1. Studying the history of research on virtual folklore;

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2. Investigating the forms of manifestation of proverbs emerging in the internet environment and identifying the means of their embodiment;

3. Conducting a functional-semantic analysis of proverbs in virtual folklore and determining classification groups;

4. Investigating the thematic and content characteristics of proverbs formed in the internet environment.

Scientific novelty of the research. The study of proverbs in the electronic environment has created the opportunity to uncover several scientific innovations. The main novelty of the dissertation is primarily defined by the originality of the topic. The dissertation is the first systematic research work dedicated to the study of proverbs in the internet environment as modern folklore texts within Azerbaijani folklore studies. The originality of the problem also conditions the novelty of its results. In this regard, the research has yielded many new findings related to the resolution of the problem. The scientific novelties of this dissertation, based on the content and form of modern proverbs formed in the internet environment, their means of manifestation and embodiment, and their semantic features, can be summarized as follows:

‒ Proverbs in the internet environment have been studied systematically for the first time, with their similarities and differences identified in comparison to classical folklore examples;

‒ Proverbs in the internet environment have been classified and systematically analyzed for the first time;

‒ Proverbs in the context of electronic information culture have been analyzed extensively for the first time.

‒ The theoretical-methodological classification of proverbs formed in internet folklore has been determined, and for the first time, contemporary issues related to proverbs have been explained based on examples of proverbs;

‒ Gender issues in the electronic environment have been investigated, and changes regarding factors related to gender perspectives have been highlighted;

– The transformation of proverbs into the internet environment has been discussed in terms of their manifestation and embodiment, with detailed explanations of the issues related to form and content.

Theoretical and practical significance of the research:

In the dissertation, numerous sources and topics related to the literature, as well as folklore examples existing in the internet environment, have been examined. The innovations and findings obtained during the research have provided the theoretical basis for the dissertation.

The research work can be useful in the study of modern folklore, as well as in the investigation of the history of virtual folklore within Azerbaijani folklore studies. The conclusions obtained during the research can be used as textbooks in universities, especially in the Faculty of Philology in higher education institutions, as well as in the teaching process of modern folklore and virtual folklore courses.

Appropriation and application of the research. The content of the research has been reflected in the thesis, articles, and conference papers published in scientific collections and journals of Azerbaijan and various foreign countries.

The topic of the dissertation was approved by the decision of the Scientific Council of the Folklore Institute of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (protocol No. 2, April 9, 2018) and the Humanities Problem Council (protocol No. 2, September 29, 2018).

The name of the organization in which the research work is performed. The dissertation was conducted at the Modern Folklore Department of the Folklore Institute of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences.

The total volume of the research with a sign indicating the volume of the structural parts of the dissertation separately. The dissertation work consists of an Introduction (11,730 characters), Chapter I (54,961 characters), Chapter II (152,535 characters),

Chapter III (55,510 characters), Conclusion (8,282 characters), and a list of references, with a total volume of 348,939 characters.

MAİN CONTENT OF THE RESEARCH

In the part of "Introduction" section of the dissertation, the relevance of the topic and the degree of its development, the object and subject of the research, the goals and objectives, the research methods, the key thesis to be defended, as well as the scientific-theoretical and practical significance of the research and its scientific novelty are clarified.

In the first chapter titled *"History of the Study of Virtual Folklore"* the scientific-theoretical foundations of the problem are defined. This chapter presents general information about virtual folklore and priority issues faced by modern folkloristics. One of the priority issues for modern folkloristics is the study of virtual folklore, its origins, unique features, essence, changes occurring in virtual folklore due to the development of information and communication technologies, and determining how genres transitioning from traditional folklore to the internet environment are changing in terms of form and content. It also involves characterizing the internet folklore based on its manifestation and embodiment characteristics.

In the first paragraph of this chapter titled *"Virtual Folklore: Its Essence and Key Features"*[11] according to the results of the research, the rapid development of information and communication technologies has accelerated the study and examination of virtual folklore from a broader perspective. Since virtual folklore is based on the internet, this chapter analyzes these two factors interactively, studying the internet environment, the ongoing folklore processes, and the systematic examination and analysis of virtual folklore.

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[11] **About the results obtained in the paragraph, see:** Hasanova, G. M. (2019). *Principles in the transitional phase from traditional folklore to virtual folklore and their manifestation in proverbs. Philological Issues*, Institute of Literature named after Nizami, (No. 16), pp. 310–316. Baku.

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Based on this, the emergence of trends in the internet environment, the current situation, changes, and which traditions and behaviors continue are determined. The study is grounded in the concept of electronic information culture, focusing on the study of virtual folklore, internet environments, electronic environments, electronic culture, and the folklore existing in these environments.

To substantiate the ideas about virtual folklore and its features, events of the 20th century are analyzed. The second half of the 20th century was characterized by significant changes in all spheres and was marked by a development strategy. Economic and social development also influenced the cultural sector. The dynamic developments in every economic and cultural sector left traces in folklore, which can be seen in the study of folklore through comparative methodologies. By integrating the methodology of American and European folklore studies into the study of our own folklore, it became possible to approach folklore from a comparative perspective. The capabilities provided by the electronic environment enriched the structural mechanism of folklore.

Folklore, as the culture of the people, has always evolved in accordance with the demands of time. Both traditional and virtual folklore have unique features, both similar and differing from one another. The goal of both types of folklore is to reflect the thought processes and worldview of the people, formed within the framework of the people's perception. Their core aim is to manifest the specific thinking and worldview of the people.

Traditional folklore's features, such as traditionalism, anonymity, collectivity, variability, and folk-like qualities, have also spread to virtual folklore, gaining their own distinctive flavor. While the means of manifestation of this folklore adapt to modern technological requirements, they are still rooted in traditional foundations. Folklore emerging in internet resources today forms itself upon the traditional forms and tools, using various traditional formulas and techniques. A deep analysis of these folklore examples, which have undergone changes in form and content, shows that traditional patterns are still at their core.

Virtual folklore is also anonymous. Just as it is unknown who first created the folklore samples inherent to oral folk creativity, these samples are passed down orally. Similarly, in virtual folklore, it is not known who created the samples. These folklore samples, created on internet resources, are transmitted through email and social networks, and overall, their creators' identities are irrelevant.

According to Hikmat Quliyev's views, folklore existed even before the invention of computers, and this existence was transmitted through face-to-face communication. The author links the emergence of folklore in a form different from earlier times to the opportunities provided by the technological environment[12].

Mehmet Emin Bars states that *"Traditional societies are now being replaced by industrial and technological societies"*[13]. In his views, he also emphasizes that the creativity emerging in the virtual environment is constantly developing and improving in terms of its content. These thoughts confirm the idea that virtual folklore has moved beyond urban or rural areas.

The richness of folklore and its dynamic development in the online environment, combined with the speed of the internet and the creative abilities of users, has led to a faster spread of folklore. According to İlker Ozdemir's[14] views on the impact mechanisms of events in the 21st century on folklore, unlike the mass media age, folk creativity has never been as widespread as it is now. The 21st century is a rich period, with particular emphasis on global integration, the strengthening of national development strategies, and the rapid dynamics of progress. Each of these successes contributes to the renewal of culture in parallel with social changes. The impact

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[12] Xavari, S. *Multidisciplinary Analysis of the Functional Structure of Folklore* / S. Xavari, H. Guliyev, S. Qarayev – Baku: Science and Education, – 2016, – 496 p.

[13] Bars, M.E. Internet Folklore: Netlore // *International Journal of Language, Literature, and Folklore Studies*, – 2018. – p. 160–179.

[14] Ozdemir, İ. *Virtual Culture: Illusion or Reality?* // *Folklore/Literature*, 2012/4, 18 (71), p. 13–34.

of all these factors on folklore, and its emergence as a part of it, should be accepted as a natural process.

According to Ahmet Ozgur Guvench[15], the electronicization of every issue and proving its electronic nature is formed by adding the letter "e" at the beginning of words. As the dynamics of development increase day by day, the electronicization of all processes should be considered a step towards accessibility. The electronicization of folklore, as the transformation of our cultural heritage and folklore examples into the internet environment, should be seen as a step aimed at further preserving and safeguarding these processes.

Alan Dundes[16] emphasized that folklore continues to live and develop in the twenty-first century. Based on this idea, we can say that today, folklore has gained greater popularity and expansion due to the opportunities created by the internet. Events occurring in social and cultural life create the conditions for the content of virtual folklore to be diverse and dynamic.

In the second paragraph of the first chapter, titled *"The History of Virtual Folklore Research in the Modern Folklore Paradigm"*[17] the history of virtual folklore is examined, with a focus on theoretical perspectives in European, American, Russian, Turkish, and Azerbaijani folklore studies. The research explains in chronological order how folklore initially emerged in a small environment and later, with the development of computers and the internet, expanded

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[15] Guvenc, A.O. "A Proposed Term for Internet Folklore: e–folklore" // Journal of the Social Sciences Institute of Ataturk University, 2014, No. 18. – p. 31–46.

[16] Dundes, A. "Folkloristics in the Twenty-First Century (AFS Invited Presidential Plenary Address, 2004)" // The Journal of American Folklore, 2005, Vol. 118, No. 470.

[17]**About the results obtained in the paragraph, see:** Hasanova, G. M. (2019). *The history of research on virtual folklore within the paradigm of modern folklore.* In *Research on Azerbaijani Oral Folk Literature (specialization in Folklore Studies),* Institute of Folklore of ANAS, No. 2, Vol. 55, pp. 65–74. Baku. Hasanova, G. M. (2021). *Virtual folklore in the socio-cultural environment. Transcarpathian Philological Studies,* Ukraine, No. 14, pp. 263–268.

to a global level. It is emphasized that the development of industrial production led to positive changes in various spheres of society, including the influence on the content of folklore.

According to Sergey Neklyudov[18], *"Modern urban folklore includes both traditional folklore genres adapted to modern urban life and urban texts disseminated in two forms (oral and written)"*.

According to Fuzuli Bayat[19], the development related to urban life and industry plays a role in influencing folklore. The author links the role of this influence with new topics arising from innovations, as well as modern forms.

Hikmat Guliyev notes that "The development of information and communication technologies has led to the faster, easier, and more efficient provision of various aspects of human life and daily needs"[20]. With the advent of the telephone, communication, and especially the internet, communication tools among people have become enriched. Initially, the functions of face-to-face communication have now started to be carried out via the internet. In his research, Hikmat Guliyev has studied issues such as

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[18]Neklyudov, S.Y. Folklor of the modern city // CD Scientific–methodological seminar "Folklor and folkloristics: modern scientific paradigma and educational technologies. Collections. Khestronomatiya po folkloristike. Zvukovaya khristomatiya". St. Petersburg: Propov Center SPbSU; Institute of History of Arts, 2003; Neklyudov, S.Y. Folklor i sovremennost': 20th century results // From king to king. Meeting with the second all-Russian king of folklorists. Collection of materials. Moscow: GRTsRF, 2010. pp. 30–42. – pp. 385–408.

[19] Bayat, F. *From Folklore to Postfolklore, Folkloristics: Problems, Researches* // Baku: Dede Gorgud, 2018. No. 2, p. 39–51.

[20] Guliyev, H. *Folklore in the Virtual Environment: Tradition and Communication* / H. Guliyev. – Baku: Sabah, 2018. – 253 p.; Quliyev, H. *The Problem of Anonymity in Internet Folklore* // – Baku: Dede Gorgud, 2019. No. II, – p. 81–93;

Guliyev, H. *Folklore Processes in the Virtual Communication Environment and the Image of Albert Einstein* // – Baku: Dede Gorgud, 2017/1, – p. 99–116.

Guliyev, H. *Folklore in the Virtual Communication Environment: The Issue of Oral Tradition* // – Baku: Young Researcher, 2018. – Vol. IV, No. 2, – p. 151–157;

communication and folklore, folkloric models in digital communication tools, folklorization in virtual environments, semantic analysis of internet folklore, and the dynamics of folklore in Azerbaijani-speaking virtual spaces, using modern scientific approaches. The author's studies on the transformation from traditional folklore to virtual folklore have particularly focused on the analysis of folklore processes in the Azerbaijani-speaking virtual space[21].

The researchers Vera Rukomoynikova[22], Vadim Rozin[23], Richard Dorson[24], Trevor Blank[25], Howard Glenn[26], Mac Neill[27], Dan Ben Amos[28], Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett[29], Mariann Domokos[30], and others have conducted studies on folklore, the internet environment, the virtual environment, virtual folklore, and its characteristics. These scholars have analyzed the relationship between folklore and the internet, with a particular focus on the placement of new texts generated through technology, especially

[21] Guliyev, H. *Folklore in Information Security and Information Security in Folklore* // – Baku: Current Multidisciplinary Scientific–Practical Problems of Information Security IV Republican Conference, 2018, – p. 95–100.

[22] Rukomoynikova, V.P. Virtual Folklore: For and Against. Monograph. / V.P. Rukomoynikova. – Yoshkar-Ola. – 2004. – 128 p.

[23] Rozin, V.M. The Phenomenon of Network Folklore // Traditional Culture. – 2007. No. 3. – p. 15–22.

[24] Dorson, Richard M. Folklore and folklofe: an introduction. Edited by Richard M.Dorson. The University of Chicago press. 1972. 527 p.

[25] Trevor, J.B. Toward a Conseptual Framework for the Study of Folklore and the Internet. Folklore and the Internet: Vernacular Expression in a Digital World // – Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press. – 2009. – p.1–20.

[26] Howard, R.G. The Vernacular Web of Participatory Media // Critical Studies in Media Communication, vol. 25, – 2008b, №5, – p. 490–513

[27] McNeill, Lynne S. The internet is weird: Folkloristics in the digital age. // Folklore Fellows Network. – 2015. № 47. – p.12–13.

[28] Ben–Amos, Dan.Toward ad Definition of Folklore in Context // Journal of American Folklore 84: – p. 3–15.

[29] Kirshenblatt Gimblett, Barbara Folklores Crisis, Journal of American Folklore 111, 281–327, 1998.

[30] Domokos, M. Folklore and mobile communication // Fabula 48, – 2007, heft 1/2, – p.50–59.

computers, in the online space. This phenomenon should be considered as a natural consequence of modern life.

The integration of phones, mobile devices, and internet networks into daily life has made it essential to transfer lived experiences into the digital realm. The study of virtual folklore is directly related to the development of information and communication technologies in modern folklore paradigms.

Research on this issue indicates that the study of virtual folklore has led to the formation of new concepts and terms. Researchers analyzing the characteristics of the modern era have faced the need to reinterpret and scientifically evaluate the concepts existing in the virtual world. In the context of electronic information, terms such as "virtual folklore," "internet folklore," "network folklore," "e-folklore," "netlore," "netnography," and "newslore" are used. Each of these concepts serves to substantiate the new relationships formed between folklore and the internet. Research by Robert Kozinets[31], Kaan Varnalı[32], Russell Frank[33], and other scholars has focused on these concepts as they relate to the people and communities, reflecting their desires, thoughts, and perspectives.

In the second chapter of the research, titled *"Functional Semantics of Virtual Folk Sayings"* the functional manifestations of folk sayings and folklore texts formed in the online environment are analyzed. The research shows that the development of information and communication technologies has led to significant changes in the structure and content of virtual folklore. These changes have been influenced by the dynamics of the virtual environment, the creative performance of users, and the social and cultural processes taking place in the information society. It has been determined that while

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[31] Kozinets, R.V. On Netnography: Initial Reflections on Consumer Research Investigations of Cyberculture // Advances in Consumer Research Volume 25, eds. Joseph W. Alba & J. Wesley Hutchinson, Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, – 1998. – p. 366–371

[32] Varnalı, K. (2013). *In the footsteps of digital tribes: Netnographic research on social media*. Mediacat Publishing, Media Series, Istanbul, 288 pages.

[33] Russell, F. Newslore: Contemporary Folklore on the internet / F.Russell, Jackson University of Missisipi, – 2011. – 268 p.

virtual folklore is formed on the basis of traditional folklore, it also reinterprets it and enriches it with more modern content. Regardless of the presentation format of classic and virtual folklore examples, each must reflect national values, the folkloric spirit, and the people's thinking. Any text that does not express the spiritual world of the people cannot be considered a folklore example.

In the first paragraph of the second chapter, titled *"Manifestation Forms of Folk Sayings in Social Media"*[34] it is established that folk sayings exist in various forms in the virtual space, and this diversity, filtered from traditional folklore, manifests itself in new forms in the modern environment. While classic folklore texts were presented through words, sound, and action, in virtual folklore, they are realized through various visual and digital means such as writing, images, animation, video, illustration, and photomontage. Even in these forms, it is observed that the key characteristics inherent in folk creativity are preserved.

The role of platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and WhatsApp is significant in the spread of virtual folklore on social networks. Pages like "Albertəmi," "Atalar_yaxşı_deyib_2," "Mırt dahilər," and "Müasir atalar sözləri," where texts are published, serve to deliver modern forms of folk sayings to a broad audience[35].

The presentation of the text in digital or graphic form does not affect its folkloric essence. On the contrary, even in these forms, there are contents that reflect collective memory, carry anonymity

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[34] **About the results obtained in the paragraph, see: Hasanova, G. M.** (2020). *Means of representation of folklore in internet resources. Scientific Works of Baku Girls University*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 20–25. Baku.

[35] **Atalar_yaxşı_deyib_2 [Electronic Resource]** – February 2016. URL: https://www.instagram.com/atalar_yaxsi_deyib_2?igsh=OWZrYnJkM2dxZ2Fz.
Mamed Dayı's Full Jokes [Electronic Resource] – January 2, 2013. URL: https://www.facebook.com/Mamedfulldu/posts/547107125301758/. **Mirt Dahilər [Electronic Resource]** – September 2018. URL: https://www.instagram.com/mirt.dahiler__?igsh=MXRicGVqdzlvbjlkbw==.
Modern Proverbs [Electronic Resource] – July 12, 2012. URL: https://www.facebook.com/Gulmeli.Letifeler.Mekani/posts/203502569778431/

and variability. Despite being created by certain users and shared, the lack of recognition of the authors of these examples strengthens their connection to folklore. The visual and digital transformation of folklore further confirms its ability to be recreated and changed.

The research concluded that proverbs, which originally formed on traditional patterns, have gained new meanings and semantic nuances in the online environment, making them more relevant. While formal and structural stability is maintained, the content has been enriched with the social-political realities of the modern era. Thus, although the perspective may change in the newly created examples, their essence and function remain identical to traditional folklore examples.

Proverbs emerging in internet folklore are created based on specific time and context and their semantics respond to the social processes of society. For instance, proverbs created during the COVID-19 pandemic served as a folkloric expression of public attitude and collective experience towards the event. However, as the relevance of the virus diminished, the frequency of the spread of these examples also decreased.

According to Alan Dundes[36] and Mehmet Emin Bars[37], folklore examples are updated in the virtual space and acquire new semantic nuances in accordance with the new context. Folklore products formed in the internet environment are enriched both with the imaginary characteristics of the space and with references to the deep roots of traditional folklore. The main difference between traditional and virtual folklore examples is reflected in the variability of content. Just as a storyteller can modify the text during oral

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[36] Dundes, A. Texture, Text and Context (trans: Metin Ekici)// National Folklore, – 2003, S:38, – s 106–119; Dundes, A. Folkloristics in the Twenty First Century (AFS İnvited Presidential Plenary Adress, 2004) // The Journal of Amican Folklore, – 2005, Vol 118, N 470. – p.385–408; Dundes, A. Interpreting Folklore / A. Dundes – Bloomington: Indiana University Press, –1980, – 320 p;

[37] Bars, M.E. *Internet Folklore: Netlore // International Journal of Language, Literature, and Folklore Studies*, 2018, p. 160–179.

presentation, similarly, folklore examples circulating on the internet can transform over time, taking on different forms.

Selcan Gurçayır[38] emphasizes the revival of proverbs, an ancient form of oral literature, through transformation in the electronic environment. According to her, internet folklore, whether through traditional structures or its own unique jargon, is formed and spreads across digital platforms, playing an important role in transmitting national values from generation to generation. The widespread use of computer technologies and the internet has also created significant opportunities in the study of modern folklore.

In the second paragraph of the second chapter of the research titled *"The Spread and Transmission Mechanism of Folk Sayings in the Internet Environment"[39]*, it has been determined that the existence and functionality of virtual folklore is directly related to the internet environment. Currently, these types of folklore examples are mainly disseminated through social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc.), blogs, and forums. Virtual folklore examples are created by specific users and spread rapidly due to technological advancements. In this process, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) act not only as a technical tool but also as a cultural phenomenon. Unlike traditional folklore, internet folklore has different characteristics in terms of creation, dissemination, and functional transformation. Social, political, and cultural processes of society are reflected in social networks, which leads to the formation of new folklore examples.

According to Simon Bronner[40], considering the role of the internet as a communication tool, this environment has a significant

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[38] Gurçayır, S. *From Generation to Forum: The Transition and Computer Proverbs // National Folklore*, 2008, No. 79, p. 70–77.

[39] **About the results obtained in the paragraph, see:** Hasanova, G. M. (2020). *Dissemination and transmission of folk expressions through internet resources.* In *4th International Scientific Conference of Young Researchers*, Azerbaijan University of Engineers, No. 4, pp. 75–78. Baku.

[40] Bronner, Simon J. Digitizing and Virtualizing Folklore. Folklore and the İnternet // Utah State University Press, Logan, Utah, – 2009, – p. 21–66.

impact on the formation and deepening of relationships. The audience and environment of the internet influence the speed and form of the process of communication. Unlike traditional folklore examples, which are passed orally from person to person, virtual folklore can spread more quickly and to a wider audience through the opportunities provided by ICT, such as email, mobile applications, and social networks. Virtual folklore, which is shaped according to the demands of the contemporary era, possesses its own unique characteristics. The large user base of social networks and the possibility of presenting texts in more diverse ways enable the active dissemination of virtual folklore.

In the third paragraph of the second chapter, titled *"Functional Classification of Folk Sayings"*[41] it is noted that both traditional and virtual folklore differ in terms of the function of the sayings based on their essence and impact on society. Folk sayings aim to express people's attitudes toward events and issues in various ways. In this subsection, the unique characteristics and functional aspects of sayings created in the internet environment are analyzed, and their impact in the virtual world is emphasized.

In the fourth paragraph of the second chapter, titled *"Moral-Ethical Qualities in Folk Sayings"* the manifestations of the concept of ethics in folklore and its reflection in the internet environment are examined. It has been determined how the rules related to ethics, morality, and spirituality are embedded in folklore, and how these

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[41] **About the results obtained in the paragraph, see:** Hasanova, G. M. (2021). Classification of folk expressions emerging in the internet environment. In 4th International Nowruz Conference on Scientific Research, Baku, pp. 122–132. Hasanova, G. M. (2021). Direct message in the context of electronic information (against the background of proverbs). In Silk Road Azerbaijan University, Baku, No. 2, pp. 142–148. Hasanova, G. M. (2021). The essence of laughter in folk expressions within the context of electronic information. In III International Scientific Conference on Humanities and Social Sciences, Baku, pp. 94–96. Hasanova, G. M. (2021). Figurative expressions in the context of electronic information culture. In International Conference on Modern Research in Social and Humanities Sciences in Karabakh, Baku, pp. 84–88.

rules are manifested in both traditional and virtual folklore. Analyses of sayings in the internet environment indicate that the role of the aesthetic function in the functional structure of folklore is directly related to moral-ethical norms and ethical principles. According to Serkhan Khaveri[42], the aesthetic function in folklore is rooted in the aesthetic values of the people, who are the leading force of society. As the author points out, the aesthetic function in folklore, unlike written culture, is based on collective roots, and the worldview is connected to collective memory. In virtual folklore, the aesthetic function also relies on collective memory, and it forms within the framework of tastes and collective interests. The primary factor in evaluating any folklore text based on its essence is the meaning it carries. The classification of each example created and shared by users in the internet environment as virtual folklore is related to the mass acceptance of the text.

The second chapter of the research highlights the *"Gender issue in folk sayings: relations between women and men in virtual communication"*[43] emphasizing how gender issues are presented in folklore. The research indicates that attitudes towards women have changed over different periods, particularly when it comes to the responsibilities associated with childbirth, raising, and educating children. The categorization of women and men and the formation of their behaviors based on gender has been widely presented in folklore. The global fight for gender equality has gained significant importance in modern times. Analysis reveals that the violation of women's rights and the perception of women as biological beings, as well as their evaluation as objects, are also reflected in folklore and

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[42] Khavari, S. *Multidisciplinary analysis of the functional structure of folklore* / S.Khavari, H. Guliyev, S. Garayev – Baku: Science and Education, 2016, 496 p.

[43] **About the results obtained in the paragraph, see:** Hasanova, G. M. (2021). *A glance at gender issues in folk expressions within internet folklore.* In *World Women Conference II*, Baku, pp. 168–169. Hasanova, G. M. (2021). *Mother proverbs in the internet environment.* In *Scientific Works of Baku Girls University*, Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 55–59. Baku.

the virtual environment. For example, comparing modern internet expressions like *"Listen to your wife. With earphones in your ears"* or *"The wife is the pillar of the house. In the corner"*[44] to their traditional folklore equivalents demonstrates that disrespect towards women is not a new phenomenon.

In the third chapter, titled *"The thematic and content characteristics of virtual folk sayings"* the incorporation of modern issues into the electronic information context is discussed, with materials evaluated as a rich creative product of the collective. The role and development of social media as a branch of mass media and its active use in relation to social, economic, and cultural events in both our country and the world are explored, showing how the collective's reactions to these issues have manifested. The first paragraph of the third chapter, *"Folk Sayings in Virtual Communication"*[45] indicates that the increase in the time spent on social networks and electronic platforms has led to the creation of new sayings. These sayings have been classified into two types: those with changes in content and those that emerge directly in the virtual environment. Examples include: "Every virus is an experience", "A computer without antivirus will be infected with a virus", "Every virus has its own way", "The virus spreads as it falls", "Don't trust beauty, acne will take it away, don't trust your computer, viruses will steal it", and "Heroes' names remain as heroism, but viruses will be known for the damage they cause".[46]

The second paragraph of the third chapter, *"Reflection of Current Events in Folk Sayings"*[47] examines the events in society

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[44]https://www.facebook.com/Gulmeli.Letifeler.Mekani/posts/2035025697784 31/

[45] **About the results obtained in the paragraph, see:** Hasanova, G. M. (2020). *Proverbs and sayings related to the internet in virtual folklore.* In *News of Pedagogical University, Series on Humanities, Social and Pedagogical-Psychological Sciences*, Vol. 68, No. 1, pp. 16–22. Baku.

[46] https://big.az/107160Interesting_Words_Said_About_Computers.html, Interesting words said about computers / – September 2012.

[47] **About the results obtained in the paragraph, see:** Hasanova, G. M. (2020). *Folklore examples related to Covid-19 in the internet environment.* In

and how they are reflected in folklore. In the Azerbaijani-speaking virtual environment, numerous folk expressions related to the virus and the quarantine regime have emerged in online resources. The analysis shows that these folk expressions reflect the collective reactions to the impact of the quarantine regime on people, their activities, and adherence to rules. The curse and praise expressions related to the virus have emerged in accordance with traditional folklore forms. This demonstrates how folklore is connected to modern issues and how it manifests in a new context.

The third chapter of the research, titled *"Social and Economic Issues"*[48] analyzes the influence of historical events on various sectors of society. The semantic and structural analysis of proverbs related to socio-economic issues in the internet environment shows that these proverbs primarily reflect people's desires and wishes concerning their living conditions and lifestyle. The analysis of proverbs related to political issues reveals that the purpose of these proverbs is to convey social-political discrepancies to society. The examples play an essential role in understanding the period and specific social-political context. Additionally, it is emphasized as a positive trend that such acts of rebellion against injustice promote resistance and the establishment of measures for political struggle.

The **"Conclusion"** section of the dissertation summarizes the findings based on the research conducted. The theoretical principles applied in world folkloristics were utilized to analyze Azerbaijani virtual folklore examples, and through comparative analysis, proverbs and folklore texts were examined. It was determined that these texts gained new meanings and content in social and cultural processes.

Scientific Works of Baku Slavic University, Series on Language and Literature, Baku Slavic University, No. 1, pp. 142–150. Baku.

[48] **About the results obtained in the paragraph, see:** Hasanova, G. M. (2020). *Semantic features of folk expressions in the context of electronic information*. In *Silk Road Azerbaijan University*, No. 2, pp. 122–130. Baku.

The fact that new folklore examples appear in different forms from traditional folklore does not have a negative impact on the meaning and nuances at their core. On the contrary, these examples align with the spirit of modern times and have the potential for widespread dissemination. The analysis of proverbs related to contemporary events shows that these proverbs, regardless of their time of creation, are considered a collective thought product when accepted, and they gradually become relevant and occupy a place in society's memory.

The preservation of virtual folklore resources, materials, and the proverbs that were the research object was somewhat ensured, including their accessibility. The comparison of the preservation of classical and virtual folklore clearly shows that, in the modern era, obtaining virtual folklore examples is not only accessible but also more reliably protected. Collecting folklore materials no longer requires physical movement or long-distance travel. It has become possible to observe and share numerous examples formed in the internet environment through pages and groups created on social media.

The forms of virtual folklore have acquired new content and features in parallel with the development of information and communication technologies. While classical folklore was realized through word, sound, and action, in modern times, technological capabilities allow folklore examples to be presented in visual (images, photos), audiovisual (video, animation), and electronic text formats. The proverbs formed in the virtual space appear in response to society's current socio-cultural problems and are quickly adopted by a wide audience. Explanatory texts presented in animation format and videos shared in social network groups reflecting collective thought are some of the main forms of such examples. The widespread sharing of holiday-themed videos can be cited as a typical example of this trend.

Technological advancement has affected not only the manifestation form of folklore but also its distribution and transmission mechanisms. The increasing number of pages created

on social networks, the rapid dissemination of shares, and high interactivity indicators play a significant role in spreading virtual folklore to a wide audience. Thus, virtual folklore examples are transforming both in form and content under the influence of information and communication technologies, developing in a way that aligns with the social and cultural realities of modern times.

Therefore, the study of folklore examples arising in the context of information and communication technologies, which ensure the activity of internet folklore, is particularly important. In this regard, the collection of proverbs related to computers, the internet, and other technological concepts and the comparative analysis of their equivalents, particularly in Turkish folklore, should be considered as initial scientific steps in this area.

The research indicates that virtual folklore, based on broad technological possibilities and rapidly developing, reflects the current socio-cultural processes of modern times. The social, economic, and cultural changes occurring in society have created the conditions for the emergence of folklore examples with new content and form nuances, as well as their active existence and dissemination in the virtual environment.

The main provisions and results of the dissertation are reflected in the following books and articles of the author:

1. The manifestation of proverbs and folk sayings on internet resources // – Baku: Research on Azerbaijani Oral Folk Literature (in the field of folklore studies), Institute of Folklore, ANAS, – 2019. – No.1, – Vol. 54, – p. 143–150.

2. The historical study of virtual folklore in the paradigm of modern folklore // – Baku: Research on Azerbaijani Oral Folk Literature (in the field of folklore studies), Institute of Folklore, ANAS, – 2019. – No.2, – Vol. 55, – p. 65–74.

3. Principles in the transition from traditional folklore to virtual folklore and their reflection in proverbs // – Baku: Nizami

Institute of Literature, Philological Studies, – 2019. – No.16, – p. 310–316.

4. Proverbs and sayings related to the internet in virtual folklore // – Baku: News of the Pedagogical University, Humanities, Social and Pedagogical–Psychological Sciences Series, – 2020. – Vol. 68, – No. 1, – p. 16–22.

5. Means of expression of folklore in internet resources // – Baku: Scientific Works of Baku Girls' University, – 2020. – Vol. 11, – No. 2, – p. 20–25.

6. Semantic features of folk sayings in the electronic information context // – Baku: Silk Road Azerbaijan University, – 2020. – No.2, – p. 122–130.

7. Folklore examples related to Covid-19 in the internet environment // – Baku: Scientific Works of Baku Slavic University, Language and Literature Series, – 2020. – No. 1, – p. 142–150.

8. The spread and transmission of folk sayings on internet resources // – Baku: 4th International Scientific Conference of Young Researchers at the Azerbaijan University of Engineers, – 2020. – No.4, – p. 75–78.

9. Virtual folklore in the socio-cultural environment // – Ukraine: Zakarpatsky Philological Studies, – 2021. – No.14, – p. 263–268.

10. Classification of folk sayings emerging in the internet environment // – Baku: 4th International Nowruz Conference on Scientific Research, – 2021. – p. 122–132.
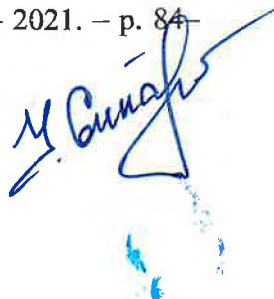
11. A look at the gender issue in folk sayings of internet folklore // – Baku: World Women Conference II, – 2021. – p. 168–169.

12. The nature of laughter in folk sayings in the context of electronic information // – Baku: 3rd International Scientific Conference on Humanities and Social Sciences, – 2021. – p. 94–96.

13. Direct messages in the context of electronic information (against the background of sayings) // – Baku: Silk Road Azerbaijan University, – 2021. – No.2, – p. 142–148.

14. Mother sayings in the internet environment // – Baku: Scientific Works of Baku Girls' University, – 2021. – Vol. 12, – No.2, – p. 55–59.

15. Descriptive sayings in the context of electronic information culture // – Baku: International Karabakh Conference on Contemporary Research in Social and Humanities, – 2021. – p. 84–88.

The defense of the dissertation will be held on *20 June*2025, *14 00* at the meeting of the Dissertation Council ED 1.27 operating under the Institute of Folklore of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences.

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The dissertation is available at the Scientific Library of the Institute of Folklore ANAS.

Electronic versions of the dissertation and abstract are posted on the official website of the HAC and the Institute of Folklore of ANAS under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The abstract was sent to the necessary addresses on *17 May* 2025.