

# *Verbalization of the Macro-concept “Fate” in the Arabian Tales “One Thousand and One Nights”*

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**Abstract**—The article is devoted to the linguocultural and linguocognitive analysis of the macro-concept **قدر Fate** in the Arabic linguistic world picture. All people have their own spiritual culture, which is reflected in the linguistic world picture; therefore, the fundamental concepts are supposed to reveal first. The main aspects of Fate in the Arabic linguistic culture are considered on the material of folk tales “One Thousand and One Nights”, since Fate is clearly reflected in fairy tales, legends, and stories in all linguistic cultures. The researcher describes the words, lexemes and expressions that reflect the notion of Fate in a fairy tales of Shahrazad “The First Night. The Story of the Merchant and the Jinni”, “The story of the fisherman”. The axiogenic situations and behavioural norms of the Arabic cultural area are presented from these tales and their linguocultural and linguocognitive analysis. The main categories of the macro-concept **قدر Fate** are defined on the material of the tales “One Thousand and One Nights”. The novelty of this study lies in the description and identification of ethno-linguistic cognitive peculiarities of the macro-concept **قدر Fate** in the Arabic linguistic world picture.

**Keywords**—*fate; “One Thousand and One Nights”; axiogenic situations; reason; patience; good*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Every culture seeks to develop its own system of identifying features that allow to distinguish between “Friend” and “Foe”. One of these characteristics is the knowledge or ignorance of certain writings, which are called precedent texts. The *precedent text* is a reminiscence from one word to the whole text. The precedent texts include not only quotes from works of art, but also myths, legends, oral-poetic works, parables, legends, fairy tales, and anecdotes.

The precedent texts play an extremely important role in the culture of society and, in particular, in the literary works created by this civilisation.

Considering the general theoretical issues of cultural language conceptualization of the world, it is important to take into account the status of the precedent text as one of the most important mental-cognitive means of language conceptualization of reality. The collection of famous Arabian folk tales “One Thousand and One Nights” is the main material for the research of this article.

Myths, legends and fairy tales as a whole are the real historical presentations of the development of the phenomena of each era: religions, traditions, customs, beliefs and convictions of people, their attitude to objects, wonders of life, as well as supernatural miracles.

### A. Literature Review

The worldview of every nation is formed into a world picture: “Every civilization, social system, is characterized by its own special way of perceiving the world” [1]. According to Maslova V.A.: “The mentality of any linguocultural community is largely determined by its world picture in which the worldview and the world outlook of its members are represented” [2]. Conceptual worldviews of different nations are diverse, which may depend on the era, as well as different social, age groups of a given nation.

The concept of Fate is the core of national and individual consciousness; for that reason, scientists of different branches explore this problem, for instance, in philosophical and religious aspects. Many works were written in the cognitive ethno-linguistic and psycholinguistic aspects, such as: M. L. Kovshova “The Concept of Fate. Folklore and Phraseology” [3]; A. I. Poltoratsky “Fate in Shakespeare’s Works” [4]; M. B. Piotrovsky, “Islam and Fate” [5]; T. V. Tsivyan “Man and His Fate – a Verdict in the Model of the World” [6].

The research is conducted in the Tajik and Arabic linguistic cultures in terms of studying the concept of Fate. The following articles were published on this topic: “Reflection of Nationally Significant Elements of Macro Concept Fate In Tajik And Pamirian Linguistic Culture: Results of Survey in Universities of Tajikistan” [7]; “National Specifics of Language Expression of Macro-concept ‘Destiny’ in the Arabic Linguoculture: Results of Association Experiment” [8]; the monograph “Study of Tolerance in the Youth Environment of Tajikistan (Linguistic Aspects)” [9].

### B. Methodological Framework

There are various research methods of concepts in cognitive linguistics. One of the most widely used methods is the verbal study of the world picture in the form of philosophical, historical descriptions of religions, beliefs, myths, etc.

Legends, myths, stories, fairy tales are still preserved among the Arab people and have a special influence on them. If we analyse the macro-concept Fate, we can cite many examples of legends, myths, stories and tales.

Karasik V. I. states that in semiotic terms, there are on the one hand situations, comprehended directly via the identification of values, on the other hand situations, described as value-neutral. Axiogenic situations are embodied in certain text types, or genres of discourse: in legends and myths, telling about the creation of the world and heroic deeds; in parables, revealing meaningful life behaviours; in proverbs and aphorisms, and also in various life stories illustrating the manifestation of values [10].

It is necessary to use both linguocognitive and linguocultural research approaches in order to represent the macro-concept Fate in the Arabic language world picture.

According to E.Yu. Balashova linguocultural approach “is the study of the specifics of the national conceptual sphere from culture to consciousness” [11]. It is important to mention here the definition of V. I. Karasik: “this approach defines a concept as a basic unit of culture, possessing imaginative, conceptual and value components with a predominance of the latter” [12]. As said by A.V. Kostin, a linguocultural approach is based on the idea of the cumulative (accumulative) function of a language, thanks to which the experience of the people, their world studies and world perception are imprinted on it, stored and transmitted [13]. Obviously, the application of these approaches is considered very important, since the material of our research is the Arabic folk tales.

It should be noted, that the linguocognitive approach is widely used to define the concept. The basis of knowledge of the world is such a unit of mental information as a concept, which provides access to the conceptual sphere of society. Correspondingly, from the position of the linguocognitive approach in order to study the concept, its field model is developed, i.e. presented in terms of core and periphery.

Attention should be drawn to the interpretation of the concept given by N. D. Arutyunova: “The concept is understood as something related to the realm of practical (everyday) philosophy, and is the result of the interaction of cultural factors, which include national tradition, folklore, religion, ideology, and life experience, images of art, sensations and value system” [14]. Based on the above definitions, it can be concluded that concepts create a kind of cultural layer, which is an intermediary between a man and the world.

## II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The most important observations are seen in the tales of the Arab people, i.e., the events replicated in the Arabic linguoculture. “One Thousand and One Nights” [15] is the pearl of Arabic oral folk art, which reflects the national specific features of ancient Arab culture. Its linguistic realization is vividly and eloquently expressed in folk tales of

“One Thousand and One Nights”. In Shahrazad’s fairy tale “The Story of the Merchant and the Jinni”, the following is said:

The First Night<sup>1</sup>:

*It has been related to me, O happy King, said Shahrazad, that there was a certain merchant who had great wealth, and traded extensively with surrounding countries. One day he mounted his horse, and journeyed to a neighbouring country to collect what was due to him, and, the heat oppressing him, he sat under a tree, in a garden and put his hand into his saddlebag, and ate a morsel of bread and a date that were among his provisions. Having eaten the date, he threw aside the stone, and immediately there appeared before him Ifrit, of enormous height, who, holding a drawn sword in his hand, approached him, and said, Rise, that I may kill thee, as thou hast killed my son. The merchant asked him, ‘How have I killed thy son?’ He answered, ‘When thou atest the date, and throwest aside the stone, it struck my son upon the chest, and, as fate had decreed against him, he instantly died’. The merchant, on hearing these words, exclaimed, ‘Verily to God we belong, and verily to Him we must return! There is no strength nor power but in God, the High, the Great! If I killed him, I did it not intentionally, but without knowing it; and I trust in thee that thou wilt pardon me’. The Jinni answered, ‘Thy death is indispensable, as thou hast killed my son,’ and so saying, he dragged him, and threw him on the ground, and raised his arm to strike him with the sword. The merchant, upon this, wept bitterly, and said to the Jinni, I commit my affair unto God, for no one can avoid what He hath decreed. He continued his lamentation, repeating the following verses:*

*Time is two days, one safe and one of peril,  
And our lives are of two halves, one fair, one overcast.  
Say to those who reproach us for what Time has done:  
‘Does Time oppose any but great men?’  
Do you not see that when the storm winds blow,  
It is the tall trees that they strike?  
Corpses rise to the surface of the sea,  
While it is in its depths that pearls lie hid.  
It may be that Time will mishandle us,  
Subjecting us to constant harm.  
Though in the heavens there are countless stars,  
Only the sun and moon suffer eclipse.  
There are both green and dry boughs on the earth,  
But we throw stones only at those with fruit.  
You think well of the days when they are fine,  
So do not fear the evil that fate brings<sup>2</sup>...*

*When he had finished reciting these verses, the Jinni said to him, Spare thy words, for thy death is unavoidable. Then said the merchant, “Know, O Ifrit, that I have debts to pay, and I have much property, and children, and a wife, and I have pledged also in my possession. Let me, therefore, go back to my house, and give to everyone his due, and then I will return to thee. I bind myself by a vow and covenant that I will return to thee, and thou shalt do what thou wilt. And God is witness of what I say”.*

<sup>1</sup> See: [https://www.gutenberg.org/files/34206/34206-h/34206-h.htm#Page\\_38](https://www.gutenberg.org/files/34206/34206-h/34206-h.htm#Page_38)

<sup>2</sup> See: <http://www.obdurodon.org/jinni/Texts.html>

*Upon this, the Jinni accepted his covenant, and liberated him; granting him a respite until the expiration of the year. The merchant, therefore, returned to his town, accomplished all that was upon his mind to do, paid everyone what he owed him, and informed his wife and children of the event, which had befallen him; upon hearing that, they and all his family and women wept. He appointed a guardian over his children, and remained with his family until the end of the year; when he took his grave-clothes under his arm, bade farewell to his household and neighbours, and all his relations, and went forth, in spite of himself; his family raising cries of lamentation, and shrieking.*

*He proceeded until he arrived at the garden before mentioned; and it was the first day of the next year; and as he sat, weeping for the calamity that he expected soon to befall him, a sheikh, advanced in years, approached him, leading a gazelle with a chain attached to its neck. This sheikh saluted the merchant, wishing him a long life, and said to him, 'What is the reason of thy sitting alone in this place, seeing that it is a resort of the Jinni?' The merchant therefore informed him of what had befallen him with the Ifrit, and of the cause of his sitting there; at which the sheikh, the owner of the gazelle, was astonished, and said, 'By Allah, O my brother, thy faithfulness is great, and thy story is wonderful! If it were engraved upon the intellect, it would be a lesson to him who would be admonished!'*

*And he sat down by his side, and said, "By Allah, O my brother, I will not quit this place until I see what will happen unto thee with this Ifrit!" So he sat down, and conversed with him. The merchant became almost senseless; fear entered him, and terror, and violent grief, and excessive anxiety. As the owner of the gazelle sat by his side, a second sheikh approached them, with two black hounds, and inquired of them, after saluting them, the reason of their sitting in that place, seeing that it was a resort of the Jinni. They told him the story from beginning to end. He had hardly sat down when there approached them a third sheikh, with a dapple mule; and he asked them the same question, which was answered in the same manner.*

*Immediately after, the dust was agitated, and became an enormous revolving pillar, approaching them from the midst of the desert; and this dust subsided, and behold, the Jinni, with a drawn sword in his hand; his eyes casting forth sparks of fire. He came to them, and dragged from them the merchant, and said to him, "Rise, that I may kill thee, as thou killedst my son, the vital spirit of my heart". The merchant wailed and wept; and the three sheikhs manifested their sorrow by weeping, crying aloud, and wailing.*

*However, the first sheikh, who was the owner of the gazelle, recovering his self-possession, kissed the hand of the Ifrit, and said to him, "O thou Jinni, and crown of the kings of the jinns! If I relate to thee the story of myself and this gazelle, and thou find it to be wonderful, and more so than the adventure of this merchant, wilt thou give up to me a third of thy claim to his blood?" He answered, "Yes. O sheikh; if thou relate to me the story, and I find it to be as thou hast said, I will give up to thee a third of my claim to his blood".*

The merchant accidentally meets a Jinni who accuses him of killing his son, and the merchant responds to him: "*Verily to God we belong, and verily to Him we must return!*" This maxim appears as an axiogenic event in the tale "*People belong to Lord and they return to Him*", i.e. life is a temporary stay on earth and a person once returns to its basis. In the fairy tale, good and evil act as universal antonymic pairs. This is clearly reflected in the expressions below: "*There is no strength nor power but in God, the High, the Great!*"; "*Time is two days, one safe and one of peril, And our lives are of two halves, one fair, one overcast. Say to those who reproach us for what Time has done: 'Does Time oppose any but great men?'; 'So do not fear the evil that fate brings'.*"

The merchant is a very truthful and fair person. When he hears the statement of the Jinni, he agrees to his death, but he remembers his debts and family. He makes a promise to the Jinni to pay for debts, bequeaths property to his children, and then returns to the Jinni. This indicates the axiogenic situation "Justice (Truth)": "*I have debts to pay*", "*I bind myself by a vow and covenant that I will return to thee, and thou shalt do what thou wilt. And God is witness of what I say*"; "*he took his grave-clothes under his arm, bade farewell to his household and neighbours, and all his relations, and went forth, in spite of himself; his family raising cries of lamentation, and shrieking*".

Attention might be drawn to the fact that a person is always afraid of death. No one knows the time of the passing from life; God only knows this. The merchant prepares for death; he completes all his business, he informs his family and friends about it and returns to the place where the Jinni is to appear and to kill him. However, here other characters appear who stop the Jinni with their interesting stories.

This implies that nobody knows where, when, in what circumstances he leaves this world, and he does not die, until his hour of death comes.

The following values and behavioural norms of the Arabic linguoculture are derived from this plot:

1. There is no power and strength for anyone except Allah, the High, and the Great!
2. Allah can see everything, He is aware of everything that happens.
3. You cannot stay in debt; you need to return the debt on time.
4. The head of the family is the man who should always think about the welfare of the family, and leave livelihood amount to his children.
5. A person should always be ready for everything: always be pure, fair to everyone and remember that you cannot do evil to others.
6. A person should know that until the cup of Fate is filled, he will live.

7. It should be remembered that everyone appreciates and respects a good, fair and rational person.

*The next fairy tale<sup>3</sup>:*

*“The story of the fisherman”. The storyline is as follows: “There was a certain fisherman, advanced in age, who had a wife and three children; and though he was in indigent circumstances, it was his custom to cast his net, every day, no more than four times. One day he went forth at the hour of noon to the shore of the sea, and put down his basket, and cast his net, and waited until it was motionless in the water. When he drew together its strings, and found it to be heavy: he pulled, but could not draw it up. So he took the end of the cord, and knocked a stake into the shore, and tied the cord to it. He then stripped himself, and dived round the net, and continued to pull until he drew it out: whereupon he rejoiced, and put on his clothes; but when he came to examine the net, he found in it the carcass of an ass. At the sight of this he mourned, and exclaimed, “There is no strength nor power but in God, the High, the Great! This is a strange piece of fortune!” And he repeated the following verse: “O thou who occupiest thyself in the darkness of night, and in peril! Spare thy trouble; for the support of Providence is not obtained by toil!”*

*He then <...> descended into the sea, and –exclaiming, In the name of God! – cast it again. <...> He drew it upon the shore; when he found in it only a large jar, full of sand and mud; on seeing which, he was troubled in his heart, <...>.*

*So saying, he threw aside the jar, and wrung out and cleansed his net; and, begging the forgiveness of God for his impatience, returned to the sea the third time. <...> he then drew it out, and found in it a quantity of broken jars and pots.*

*Upon this, he raised his head towards heaven, and said, “O God, Thou knowest that I cast not my net more than four times; and I have now cast it three times! Then exclaiming, In the name of God!” he cast the net again into the sea, <...> And he exclaimed, There is no strength nor power but in God! <...> when he opened it, and found in it a bottle of brass, filled with something, and having its mouth closed with a stopper of lead, bearing the impression of the seal of our lord Suleiman (PBUH). At the sight of this, the fisherman was rejoiced, and said, “This I will sell in the copper-market; for it is worth ten pieces of gold”. <...> So he took out a knife, and picked at the lead until he extracted it from the bottle. He then laid the bottle on the ground, <...>; but there came forth from it nothing but smoke, and then became agitated, and was converted into an Ifrit, whose head was in the clouds, while his feet rested upon the ground: ...*

A fairy tale with the axiogenic situation “Fortunately, Fortune, Patience” deserves our attention.

A hardworking fisherman feeds his family, lives poorly, but happily. He always waits for mercy and food from God. Moreover, when he throws a net into the sea, first of all he always speaks to Allah with the words: “There is no strength nor power but in God, the High, the Great!”; “In the name of God!”; “O God, Thou knowest that I cast not my net more

*than four times; and I have now cast it three times!”; “There is no strength nor power but in God!”*

It is especially clear from this episode when the fisherman is waiting very much for his lot, which he should have received. He does not require more. When he fails to get a catch, then he is upset and begins to complain about life. He begins to blame all of his problems on Fate and says the following:

*O angry fate, forbear! Or, if thou wilt not forbear, relent!*

*Neither favour from fortune do I gain, nor profit from the work of my hands,*

*I came forth to seek my sustenance, but have found it to be exhausted.*

*How many of the ignorant are in splendour! And how many of the wise, in obscurity!*

A frustrated fisherman complains ragingly about his fate and says, “I have gone out for food, but it seems that nothing is left for me – this is my lot.... Neither knowledge, nor power and wisdom will help me, nevertheless, happiness and all fortunes are distributed in advance, the vicissitudes of fate oppress the educated, decent and wise”.

*When the fisherman beheld this Ifrit, the muscles of his sides quivered, his teeth were locked together <...>. The Ifrit, as soon as he perceived him, exclaimed, There is no deity but God: Suleiman (PBUH) is the Prophet of God. O Prophet of God, slay me not...”*

*“O Marid”, said the fisherman, “dost thou say, Suleiman is the Prophet of God? Suleiman (PBUH) hath been dead a thousand and eight hundred years; and we are now in the end of time. What is thy history, and what is thy tale, and what was the cause of thy entering this bottle?”*

*When the Marid heard these words of the fisherman, he said, “There is no deity but God! Receive news, O fisherman!”*

*“Of what”, said the fisherman, “dost thou give me news?” He answered, “Of thy being instantly put to a most cruel death”.*

*The fisherman exclaimed, “Wherefore wouldst thou kill me? And what requires thy killing me ...”*

*“Know then”, said he, “that I am one of the heretical Jinns. I rebelled against Suleiman (PBUH) the son of Daood (PBUH), I and Şakhr, the Jinni. And he sent to me his Wezeer, Aşaf the son of Barkhiya, who came upon me forcibly, and took me to him in bonds, and placed me before him. When Suleiman saw me, he offered up a prayer for protection against me, and exhorted me to embrace the faith and to submit to his authority; but I refused. Upon which he called for this bottle, confined me in it, and closed it upon me with the leaden stopper, which he stamped with the Most Great Name: he then gave orders to the Jinni, who carried me away, and threw me into the midst of the sea. There I remained a hundred years; and I said in my heart, Whosoever shall liberate me, I will enrich him for ever. But the hundred years passed over me, and no one liberated me. And I entered upon another hundred years; and I said, Whosoever shall liberate me, I will open to him the treasures of the earth. But no one did so. And four hundred years more passed over me, and I*

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.gutenberg.org/files/34206/34206-h/34206-h.htm#Page\\_86](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/34206/34206-h/34206-h.htm#Page_86)

said, *Whosoever shall liberate me, I will perform for him three wants. But still no one liberated me. I then fell into a violent rage, and said within myself, Whosoever shall liberate me now, I will kill him; and only suffer him to choose in what manner he will die. And lo, now thou hast liberated me, and I have given thee thy choice of the manner in which thou wilt die.*

*When the fisherman had heard the story of the Ifrit, he exclaimed, "O Allah! that I should not have liberated thee but in such a time as this!" Then said he to the Ifrit, "Pardon me, and kill me not; and so may God pardon thee" <...> The Ifrit answered by saying, "Covet not life, for thy death is unavoidable".*

*Then said the fisherman within himself, "This is a Jinni, and I am a man; and God hath given me sound reason. Therefore, I will now plot his destruction with my art and reason, like as he hath plotted with his cunning and perfidy". So he said to the Ifrit, "Hast thou determined to kill me?" He answered, "Yes". Then said he, "By the Most Great Name engraved upon the seal of Suleiman (PBUH), I will ask thee one question; and wilt thou answer it to me truly?" On hearing the mention of the Most Great Name, the Ifrit was agitated, and trembled, and replied, "Yes, ask, and be brief". The fisherman then said, "How wast thou in this bottle? It will not contain thy hand or thy foot; how then can it contain thy whole body?" "Dost thou not believe that I was in it?" said the Ifrit. The fisherman answered, "I will never believe thee until I see thee in it"...*

The axiogenic event "Intelligence" is verbalized at the end of the tale. When Ifrit tries to deceive and kill the fisherman, dictating to him: *"thy death is unavoidable", "choose by what manner of death thou wilt die"*. The fisherman reflects on the fact that man has been given intelligence and has to act rationally, intellect gives him the opportunity to get out of difficult situations, get rid of delusions. So he uses his mind and gets rid of the Jinni.

The following behavioural norms emerge from this tale:

1. Man must know that Divine mercy is infinite.
2. You should know that the Creator is always near and comes to help you when you are in trouble.
3. You should know that patience is one of the pious qualities and brings a person good and success.
4. One should know that prayer and patience allow a person to survive in adversity, wait for the moment when Allah shows his mercy;
5. It should be remembered, that a person should be content with what is given to him.
6. It should be remembered, that who is given his fortune, receives his part of the good.
7. It should be remembered that the intelligence is the golden key of fate.
8. It should be remembered that every person has to pass the exam.

### III. CONCLUSION

The macro-concept of Fate is an ethnospecific concept; therefore, it requires linguocultural study. This method makes possible to establish a system of axiogenic situations, value-marked events of particular importance for understanding reality. Such events are reflected in precedent texts from ancient times: in myths, legends, parables, aphorisms, proverbs, and other life stories. It is possible with the help of explanation, interpretation of various precedent and sacred texts not only to derive norms and values that determine people's behaviour, but also to take into account prohibitions and regulations relating to the spiritual, value, moral spheres of life.

It is very important to preserve the value benchmarks, which we obtain due to the precedent texts, and pass them on to the next generation. Considering the macro-concept of Fate in philosophical and theological terms, it is worthy to note the significance, relevance of philosophical and religious representations and interpretations of this macro-concept in the Arabic linguocultures.

The philosophical and theological aspects of macro-concept Fate in the Arabic linguoculture show a high degree of national specificity, which is shown in the precedent texts of the Arab people. The legendary tales "One Thousand and One Nights" are the inexhaustible treasure of the Arab people.

Appropriate, wise, interesting tales and stories of the Arabic folklore indicate that certain situations are based on certain values that deserve reflection and transmission from generation to generation. Because of the analysis of the Arabic linguoculture on the material of precedent texts, we identify such components of Destiny as *Divine mercy, patience, good, success; prayer, fortune, good, reason, exam; family welfare,* etc.

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