

PROVERBS AS AN OBJECT OF LINGUISTIC RESEARCH

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Abstract: This article provides important insights into the significance of proverbs in modern cognitive linguistics. Additionally, it analyzes the most precise and general definitions of the concept of “proverb” based on the opinions of several linguists who have conducted research in this field. The article also explores the differences between proverbs and sayings, the unique characteristics of proverbs, and their importance as an object of philological research.

Key words: Proverbs, linguistic, synonymic, antonymic, gradonymic, polysemy, typology.

Uzbek linguists have also provided comprehensive definitions of proverbs. For example, the Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language states that the term *maqol* (proverb) originates from the Arabic word *qavlun* (قول), meaning “to speak” or “to say.” In modern Uzbek, a proverb is defined as “a concise, figurative, and wise phrase or sentence created by the people based on life experience, usually containing moral advice.” Another definition describes it as “a genre of folk oral literature; a short, concise, figurative, grammatically and logically complete wise phrase with deep meaning and a specific rhythmic structure.” In Uzbek, proverbs are sometimes also referred to as “*masal*”, “*zarbulmasal*”, “*hikmat*,” wise sayings, words of the elders, wise proverbs, and sayings of the sages [1].

Several scholars, including H. Zarifov, M. Afzalov, R. Jumaniyozov, M. Fozilov, T. Mirzayev, B. Sarimsoqov, and M. Sodiqova, have made significant contributions to the study and publication of Uzbek proverbs. Their research provides a general characterization of folk proverbs and defines their thematic scope [2].

P. U. Bakirov's doctoral dissertation, *Nomino-centric Proverbs in Different Language Systems (Based on Russian, Uzbek, and Kazakh Materials)*, develops key principles and methods of comparative paremiology. The dissertation establishes the status of proverbs as a special type of paremiological unit, determines their place among other paremiological expressions, and proposes theoretical foundations for their comparative study. It also conducts a comprehensive analysis of paremiological units in different language systems, classifies nominally-centered proverbs in Russian, Uzbek, and Kazakh into thematic groups, and describes their structure in multi-system languages [3].

B. M. Jurayeva's dissertation, *The Linguistic Status and Semantic-Stylistic Usage of Proverbs*, thoroughly examines the semantic features of Uzbek folk proverbs. It identifies the common characteristic uniting proverbs and idioms- their idiomatic nature. The dissertation also differentiates between proverbs and idioms etymologically and semantically, highlights their syntactic distinctions, and analyzes the unique features that separate proverbs from sayings. Furthermore, it explores the synonymic, antonymic, and gradonymic relationships of proverbs with other linguistic units, as well as the phenomena of monosemy and polysemy in proverbs for the first time [4].

Based on their research, B. Sarimsoqov and M. Afzalov classify proverbs as follows:

1. Alphabetical classification – Proverbs are arranged in alphabetical order, making it easier for users to find specific ones.

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2. Thematic classification – Proverbs are grouped according to topics and presented alphabetically within each group.

3. Poetic classification – Over time, the meaning of many proverbs changes. Some were originally used in their literal sense but later gained figurative meanings. This classification identifies:

Proverbs used in their literal sense.

Proverbs used in a figurative sense (e.g., “A dry spoon tears the mouth”).

Proverbs used only metaphorically (e.g., “A fish rots from the head down”).

4. Historical classification – Proverbs belong to different historical periods. For example: Proverbs from the era of slavery: “Sand does not turn into stone, nor does a slave become a master”, “If a slave becomes insolent, he spits in the well”.

Proverbs from the feudal era: “Better a beggar’s fist than a nobleman's feast”, “A rich man’s bread is always half”, “Your back will break before you reach the lord”. These proverbs are now used in a figurative sense.

5. Structural classification – Proverbs are categorized based on their logical components:

Two-component proverbs: “An unspoken word is a stick that hasn't landed”, “Work stimulates appetite, a lazy person avoids work”.

Four-component proverbs: “If there is no woman on the horse, do not abandon the road. If a young man has no wealth, do not leave him in battle”.

Artistic and Stylistic Features of Proverbs

Proverbs are concise, express ideas clearly, and exist in both prose and poetic forms. Another key feature is their use of artistic and figurative devices, such as: Antithesis (contrast) – “A true friend speaks bitterly, an enemy makes you laugh”, “Think a lot, speak little”, “The crooked deteriorates, the straight prospers”. Metaphor – “Flesh and nails cannot be separated”.

Some proverbs also criticize negative human traits, such as “A greedy person will die on a holiday”, or “An axe that splits firewood is left in the field” [6].

Proverbs as a Source of Moral Advice:

The didactic nature of proverbs makes them highly effective and impactful. For example, the English proverb “A bad excuse is better than none” can be translated into Uzbek as “Reluctant apologies are still better than none”. A similar Uzbek proverb is “Yaxshi gap bilan ilon inidan chiqar, Yomon gap bilan musulmon dinidan”. Both proverbs emphasize the importance of speaking kindly.

In studying proverbs, their structure and syntactic completeness are crucial. Proverbs can consist of a single syntactic unit, often resembling declarative sentences. In this regard, Uzbek and English proverbs are very similar:

“The absent is always in the wrong” - “O’zi yo’qning - ko’zi yo’q”.

“There is no accounting for tastes” – “Har kim suygan oshini ichadi”.

“Actions speak louder than words” – “Gap bilguncha - ish bil”.

“Advise none to marry or go to war” - “Har kimning niyati o’zining yo’ldoshi”.

Most proverbs consist of two parts: one describing a situation and the other providing a conclusion:

“After dinner sit a while, after supper walk a mile” – “Eat before you feel hungry, stop before you feel full” [7].

Conclusion:

In the conclusion, both English and Uzbek proverbs reflect the cultural heritage of their respective nations. They encapsulate the thoughts, worldview, lifestyle, character, and beliefs of the people. Since each nation has its own unique characteristics, these are naturally reflected in its proverbs. Even

when the themes of English and Uzbek proverbs are similar, their imagery remains distinct, contributing to their national flavor.

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