

SOME SEMANTIC-STRUCTURAL FEATURES OF ENGLISH PROVERBIAL CONSTRUCTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The present article is devoted to investigation of the semantic-structural features of English proverbs. The notion “proverb” is explained by the viewpoints of linguists in the sphere of paremiology, i.e. the branch of linguistics that studies proverbs and sayings. Theoretical analysis of the article is proved by examples of English proverbs.

Key words: *proverb, proverbial construction, paremiology, semantics, structure, national language, etymology, meaning.*

Many linguists have addressed the issues of the origin of proverbs and have come to the conclusion that their author is the people and folk wisdom. Proverbs go back to folklore and describe various human qualities, endowing them with a wide variety of assessments passed down from generation to generation.

A proverbial construction, i.e. proverb is a traditional saying that expresses advice or is a teaching in a concise and meaningful form [Longman Dictionary of English Idioms, 1996, p. 8].

According to Yu.N. Karaulov, language assessment has been presented in the national language for a long time by the paremiological foundation [Yu.N. Karaulov, 1986, p. 49]. Indeed, the national cultural mentality is most pronounced in the paremiological units of the language. They reveal stereotypes of human behavior, social norms governing the behavior of people in a given situation. The norms of

human speech behavior are fixed in proverbial units. The wisdom inherent in the proverb belongs to humanity (hence the similarity of many proverbs among different peoples). Therefore, it will be interesting to identify the individual characteristics of a particular people, their ethnocultural characteristics.

Proverbs and sayings should be considered as units peculiar not only to the language of the work of art, but also to the entire language as a whole. According to the conditions of their existence in the language, proverbs and sayings do not resemble folklore, they are never “fulfilled”, but exist in the language and function in it in the same way as other phraseological phrases. It seems that the study of proverbs and sayings should be an integral part of the study of vocabulary and phraseology of the language as a whole” [L.B. Nikitina, 1996, p. 14].

It is quite obvious that paremias have a wide and frequent use to reinforce their own thoughts, to convince their words with reference to the national wisdom and centuries-old experience of the people. Semantic content is indicative in proverbial expressions, which, on the one hand, is universal and commonly used, but, on the other hand, metaphorical and specific, allowing them to be used for a certain life situation. Proverbs or proverbial expressions give a statement a special vividness, brightness and expressiveness. If we turn to the period of the appearance of the first proverbs and sayings, it should be pointed out that even the ancient Greeks and Romans used them and respected them as examples of folk wisdom. Aristotle considered proverbs a stylistic decoration of speech.

The fund of proverbial formations developed at different times and epochs, it was replenished each time with new units reflecting new facts, phenomena, events, and persons, which is associated with an indisputable proof of their wisdom. In addition, proverbs are of interest in terms of their national and cultural semantics, because they reveal the peculiarities of national and ethical nature, public order, folklore, fiction, art, everyday life and customs of different peoples of the world. Each language has its own treasury of paremiological units, as a mirror reflecting the history, culture, and way of life of its speakers.

Proverbs transmit the national identity and national mentality of a certain people or ethnic group from generation to generation and become an important feature in the formation of a picture of the world. For this reason, proverbs are considered to be those linguistic units that describe or reveal the peculiarities of the national mentality. However, proverbs can evoke individual associations and imaginations in a person, as a representative of a certain ethnic group, as well as a degree of perception. This is due to the fact that the image of the world of each nation is based on its own system of objective meanings, social stereotypes and cognitive schemes.

Proverbs are characterized by a figurative, allegorical meaning, which allows them to be used in relation to many phenomena. Ambiguity makes proverbs necessary in everyday speech and provides an opportunity to define a particular phenomenon for practical purposes.

A great number of proverbs were created by working people such as seamen, hunters, farmers, workmen, housewives and cooks and so on, using familiar terms that were associated with their own trades and occupations. For example, *Living without the aim is like sailing without a compass* was first used by seamen; *If you run after two hares, you will catch neither* by hunters; *April rains for corn, May for grass* by farmers; *New broom sweeps clean* by housewives and *Too many cooks spoil the broth* by cooks, etc. Such expressions were all colloquial and informal and once confined to a limited group of people engaged in the same trade or activity. But they were proved to be vivid, and forcible and stimulating, so later they broke out of their bounds and gradually gained wide acceptance. As a result, their early stylistic features faded in some way and many have come to become part of the common core of language, now being used in different occasions. Some proverbs are related to some folk practice and customs. For example, *Good wine needs no bush*. This proverb is from an ancient popular English practice. In the past, English wine merchants tended to hang some ivy bushes or a picture of ivy bushes on their doors as a symbol of wine selling. But some merchant's wine was so good that it can't be ignored without sign. This in fact shows the past common

practice that merchants of different trades would hang different particular things as signs for their goods.

Attention is paid to those expressive means by which the persistence or memorability of proverbs and sayings is obtained. One such means is accurate or assonant rhyme: *East or West, home is best.*

English proverbs are very diverse in content and cover all aspects of the life of the English people.

They make fun of defective traits of human: *Bacchus has drowned more men than Neptune*, meaning is more people died because of drinking than because of drowning.

The laziness is convicted: *Every day is not Sunday.*

The notion of the saying in up- to- day folklore is uncertain, including the diverse structural-semantic models of stable shaped combinations of words. Essentially, a single matter that unites these different combinations of words is that they cannot be named proverbs, though the proximity of both in certain situations is not to be rejected.

Adjective can have not only subject but also the second noun, for instance, *April showers bring forth May flowers* where *April* and *May* are adjectives.

In some proverbs, the second noun has prepositional adjective, while subject does not have it, for example, *Jack is no judge of Jill's beauty.*

There are some proverbs with the negative particle *not*. Particle *not* is usually used with auxiliary and modal verbs. *Rome was not built in a day, every day is not Sunday.* It also can be used in compound structures, for instance, *if the mountain will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain.*

Particle *no* is rarely practiced in proverbs, for example, *all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.*

Interrogative sentences among English proverbs are extremely rare. These include the following proverbs: *when Adam delved and Eve span who was then a gentleman?; Is Saul also among the prophets?*

These sentences, interrogative in form, in meaning are declarative sentences, i.e. rhetorical questions.

So, proverbs can be included to the verbal type of PUs. Sayings, as well as proverbs, are sentences. But these categories of PUs, there are essential differences in functional terms, as the directive, didactic and evaluative function are not peculiar to sayings. Proverbs are an expression of folk wisdom, and they are characterized by a higher degree of abstraction than for sayings.

LITERATURE

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