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Department of English Language and Literature

SYNOPSIS

Theme: Proverbs and Sayings

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INTRODUCTION

The course paper is dedicated to the study of English proverbs and sayings in the system of English stylistics.

The aim of the course paper is to study the peculiarities of proverbs and sayings and their usage in various language discourses and especially in literature and written discourse and to show its differential peculiarities from other stylistic devices in Modern English.

In the course of writing the course paper we set the following aims and tasks of the course paper according to its main aim:

- to study peculiarities of English proverbs;
- to study proverbs and sayings and their types;
- to make a classification of English proverbs;
- to define the usage of proverbs and sayings from the stylistical point of view;

The main material of the course paper are several theoretical books on stylistics and information from Internet. The examples have been gathered from different English and American writers' work of art.

The theoretical value of the course paper is that theory and examples can serve as the main material in lectures and seminars on English Stylistics and Text Interpretation.

The practical importance of the course paper is that one can compile a handbook on Stylistics and Comparative study of language on the base examples.

The course paper consists of Introduction, main part, Conclusion and Bibliography.

THE MAIN PART

1. Proverbs and Sayings as the Set Expressions of the English Language

In language studies there are two very clearly-marked tendencies that the student should never lose sight of, particularly when dealing with the problem of word combination. They are 1) the analytical tendency, which seeks to dissever one component from another and 2) the synthetic tendency which seeks to integrate the parts of the combination into a stable unit.

These two tendencies are treated in different ways in lexicology and stylistics. In lexicology the parts of a stable lexical unit may be separated in order to make a scientific investigation of the character of the combination and to analyse the components. In stylistics we analyse the component parts in order to get at some communicative effect sought by the writer. It is this communicative effect and the means employed to achieve it that lie within the domain of stylistics.

The integrating tendency also is closely studied in the realm of lexicology, especially when linguistic scholars seek to fix what seems to be a stable word combination and ascertain the degree of its stability, its variants and so on. The integrating tendency is also within the domain of stylistics, particularly when the word combination has not yet formed itself as a lexical unit but is in the process of being so formed.¹

2. Proverbs and Sayings Defined

A proverb, (from the Latin *proverbium*), is a simple and concrete saying popularly known and repeated, which expresses a truth, based on

¹ Гальперин Р.И. “Очерки по стилистике английского языка” Москва 1986.

common sense or the practical experience of humanity. They are often metaphorical. A proverb that describes a basic rule of conduct may also be known as a maxim. If a proverb is distinguished by particularly good phrasing, it may be known as an aphorism.

Proverbs are often borrowed from similar languages and cultures, and sometimes come down to the present through more than one language. Both the Bible (Book of Proverbs) and medieval Latin have played a considerable role in distributing proverbs across Europe, although almost every culture has examples of its own.

The study of proverbs is called: paremiology (from Greek παροιμία - paroimía, "proverb") and can be dated back as far as Aristotle. Paremiography, on the other hand, is the collection of proverbs. A prominent proverb scholar in the United States is Wolfgang Mieder. He has written or edited over 50 books on the subject, edits the journal *Proverbium*, has written innumerable articles on proverbs, and is very widely cited by other proverb scholars. Mieder defines the term proverb as follows:

A proverb is a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorizable form and which is handed down from generation to generation.

Subgenres include proverbial comparisons (“as busy as a bee”), proverbial interrogatives (“Does a chicken have lips?”) and twin formulas (“give and take”).²

A saying is a short, clever expression that usually contains advice or expresses some obvious truth. Many traditional sayings are still in general use today. Most of the sayings in this section are well known in English, though some of them come from other languages. The meaning

² http://www.en.wikiquote.org/wiki/English_proverbs

or interpretation shown for each saying is believed to be the generally accepted interpretation of the saying, though for some sayings the interpretation may be more subjective than for others.

There are literally thousands of sayings in English (and all languages). The term saying conveys the idea of any expression of wisdom or truth, usually handed down by earlier generations. The origin of a saying is, in most cases, unknown. Many English sayings have come from other languages, and vice versa.

Most sayings are effective thanks to their shortness and directness. They use simple, vivid language, often based on everyday domestic situations, making them easy to understand and remember.

Sayings may be classified under a number of different terms, of which proverb is probably the best known. Other types of saying are adage, maxim, motto, epigram and aphorism, though frankly the distinction between them is often vague:

- adage: is a time-honored and widely known saying ("Where there's smoke, there's fire – нет дыма без огня")

- maxim: a general rule of behaviour drawn from practical experience ("Neither a borrower nor a lender be- ни заемщик, ни кредитор")

- motto: a maxim adopted as a principal of conduct ("Honesty is the best policy")³

- epigram: is a brief, witty, or satirical statement that often gains effect through paradox ("The only way to get rid of temptation is to yield to it-единственный способ избавиться от искушения – поддаться ему")

³ http://www.en.wikiquote.org/wiki/English_proverbs

- aphorism: similar to an epigram but more profound rather than witty ("He is a fool that cannot conceal his wisdom – дурак, тот кто не может скрыть мудрость")

Some examples of English proverbs and sayings:

After dinner comes the reckoning. Любишь кататься, люби и саночки возить

All are not hunters that blow the horn. Не всё то золото, что блестит

Best defence is offence. Нападение - лучший вид защиты

Better late than never. Лучше поздно, чем никогда

Burden of one's own choice is not felt. Своя ноша не тянет

Cat in gloves catches no mice. Без труда не вытащишь и рыбки из пруда.

Civil denial is better than a rude grant. Вежливый отказ лучше, чем грубое согласие

Death is the grand leveler. Перед смертью все равны.

East or West - home is best. В гостях хорошо, а дома лучше.

Every man to his taste. На вкус и цвет - товарища нет.

Evil communications corrupt good manners. С кем поведешься, от того и наберешься.

Give him an inch and he'll take an ell. Дай ему палец, он и всю руку откусит.

Guilty conscience needs no accuser. Грех несет в себе и наказание.

He that has a great nose thinks everybody is speaking of it. На воре шапка горит.

Honey is sweet, but the bee stings. Видит око, да зуб неймет.

Let sleeping dogs lie. Не буди лиха, пока лихо спит.

Little body often harbours a great soul. Мал золотник, да дорог.
The furthest way about is the nearest way home. Тише едешь -
дальше
Будешь.
When pigs fly. Когда рак свистнет.

3. The Role of Proverbs and Sayings in Stylistics

Almost every good writer will make use of language proverbs, by-phrases and proverbs. As Gorki has it, they are the natural ways in which speech develops.⁴

Proverbs and sayings have certain purely linguistic features which must always be taken into account in order to distinguish them from ordinary sentences. Proverbs are brief statements showing in condensed form the accumulated life experience of the community and serving as conventional practical symbols for abstract ideas. They are usually didactic and image bearing. Many of them through frequency of repetition have become polished and wrought into verse-like shape, i.e., they have metre, rhyme and alliteration, as in the following:

"to cut one's coat according to one's cloth."

"Early to bed and early to rise,

Makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise."

Brevity in proverbs manifests itself also in the omission of connectives, as in:

"First come, first served." "Out of sight, out of mind."

But the main feature distinguishing proverbs and sayings from ordinary utterances remains their semantic aspect. Their literal meaning

⁴ Galperin I.R. "Stylistics" Moscow 1971

is suppressed by what may be termed their transferred meaning. In other words, one meaning (literal) is the form for another meaning (transferred) which contains the idea. Proverbs and sayings are the concentrated wisdom of the people, and if used appropriately, will never lose their freshness and vigour. The most noticeable thing about the functioning of sayings, proverbs and catch-phrases is that they may be handled not in their fixed form (the traditional model) but with modifications. These modifications, however, will never break away from the invariants to such a degree that the correlation between the invariant model of a word combination and its variant ceases to be perceived by the reader. The predictability of a variant of a word combination is lower in comparison with its invariant. Therefore the use of such a unit in a modified form will always arrest our attention, causing a much closer examination of the wording of the utterance, in order to get at the idea. Thus, the proverb 'all is not gold that glitters' appears in Byron's Don Juan in the following form and environment where at first the meaning may seem obscure:

"How all the needy honourable misters,

Each out-at-elbpw peer or desperate dandy,

The watchful mothers, and the careful sisters (Who, by the by, when clever, are more handy

At making matches where "is gold that glisters"¹ Than their he relatives), like flies o'er candy

Buzz round the Fortune with their busy battery,

To turn her head with waltzing and with flattery."

Out of the well-known proverb Byron builds a periphrasis, the meaning of which is deciphered two lines below: 'the Fortune', that is, 'a marriageable heiress').⁵

It has already been pointed out that Byron is fond of playing with stable word combinations, sometimes injecting new vigour into the components, sometimes entirely disregarding the *gestalt*. - In the following lines, for instance, each word of the phrase *safe and sound* gets its full meaning.

"I leave Don Juan for the present, safe — Not sound, poor fellow, but severely wounded;"

The proverb: *Hell is paved with good intentions* and the set expression: *to mean well* are used by Byron in a peculiar way, thus making the reader appraise the hackneyed phrases.

"..... .if he warr'd

Or loved, it was with what we call the best Intentions, which form all mankind's trump card,

To be produced when brought up to the test. The statesman, hero, harlot, lawyer — ward

Off each attack, when people are in quest Of their designs, by saying they meant well. 'It's pity that such meaning should pave hell."

We shall take only a few of the numerous examples of the stylistic use of proverbs and sayings to illustrate the possible ways of decomposing the units in order simply to suggest the idea behind them:

"Come!" he said, "milk's spilt." (Galsworthy) is no use crying over spilt milk!").

(from 'It

⁵ Galperin I.R. "Stylistics" Moscow 1971

"But to all that moving experience there had been a shadow (a dark lining to the silver cloud), insistent and plain, which disconcerted her." (Maugham) (from 'Every cloud has a silver lining').

"We were dashed uncomfortable in the frying pan, but we should have been a damned sight worse off in the fire." (Maugham) (from 'Out of the frying-pan into the fire').

"You know which side the law's buttered." (Galsworthy) (from 'His bread is buttered on both sides').

This device is used not only in the belles-lettres style. Here are some instances from newspapers and magazines illustrating the stylistic use of proverbs, sayings and other word combinations

"...and whether the Ministry of Economic Warfare is being allowed enough financial rope to do its worst" (Daily Worker) (from 'Give a thief rope enough and he'll hang himself').

"The waters will remain sufficiently troubled for somebody's fishing to be profitable" (Economist) (from 'It is good fishing in troubled waters').

One of the editorials in the Daily Worker had the following headline:

"Proof of the Pudding" (from 'The proof of the pudding is in the eating').

Here is a recast of a well-known proverb used by an advertizing agency:

"Early to bed and early to rise No use — unless you advertize" (from 'Early to bed and early to rise Makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise').

Uses of language set expressions such as these should not lead to the inference that stylistic effects can only be reached by introducing all kinds of changes into the invariant of the unit. The efficient use of

the invariant of proverbs, sayings, etc. will always make both spoken and written language emotional, concrete, figurative, catching and lively. It will call forth ready impact and the desired associations on the part of the hearer or reader. Modified forms of the unit require great skill in handling them and only few have the power and therefore the right to violate the fixed idiom.

4. Classification of English Proverbs and Sayings

For definition of criteria of the analysis of proverbs and sayings the factors most strongly influencing character of these expressions have been allocated by authors. Conditionally these factors can be divided into two groups:

1. External factors - a geographical position of the country, its mutual relation with the adjoining countries, climatic conditions etc.
2. Internal factors - features of a life and economic development, religion, traditions, customs etc.

The analysis of proverbs and sayings passed in two directions. First of all proverbs of each considered language of group separately were analyzed. After that, those groups of proverbs and sayings which meet equally in all considered languages (for example, the proverbs containing zoomorphisms), were analysed together.

2.2.2 The analysis of proverbs of English language

I. External factors:

1. Mutual relations with Holland

Speaking about history of the Great Britain, that fact is interesting, that in English language there are such phraseological units representing Dutches in unpleasant enough light. It is possible to explain it to that throughout centuries England competed with Holland for a rank of the first sea power of the world. This original opposition of 2 states has found the response and in English phraseology. It has reached that in 17 century the word «Dutch» ("Dutch") in England has got value "foreign" (in sense "not clear", "unusual"). Examples of English phraseological units with a keyword «Dutch» ("Dutch") are more low resulted:

Dutch bargain – мастлик холатида тузилган битим, келишув

Dutch courage – маст кишининг жасурлиги

Dutch treat – меҳмон қилиш

in Dutch – ғам-аламда

to talk like Dutch uncle – ақл ўргатмоқ (сўзма сўз «Голланд амакидек гапирмоқ»)

2. Climatic conditions

Undoubtedly, the climate makes the big impact on mentality of the people and, accordingly, finds reflexion in informal conversation to which proverbs and sayings belong.

It is known, that the climate of the Great Britain differs with its cloudy weather. It explains presence of the big number of English proverbs with a keyword «rain» ("rain"):

«It never rains but it pours» (сўзма сўз «Бахтсизлик ёмғир бўлибмас, сел бўлиб келади») - «Бало келса, кўш келади»;

«Rain at seven, fine at eleven» (сўзма сўз «7 да ёмғир бўлса, 11 да ҳаво очик») – or in Russian «Семь пятниц на неделе»;

«Keep something for a rainy day» (сўзма сўз «Бирон нарсани ёмғирли кунга сақлаб қўймоқ») - «Қора кунга сақлаб қўймоқ».

Thus, in proverbs the importance of the weather phenomena (in this case rain) is accurately looked through.⁶

II. Internal factors

1. Religion

As well as each people, Englishmen think much of religion. A considerable quantity of proverbs and sayings speak about its presence in English language, keywords of which are «God» ("God") and «devil» ("devil"). Examples of proverbs are more low resulted:

«He that serves God for money will serve the devil for better wages» - Худога пул учун ҳизмат қилган, кўпроқ пул эвазига шайтонга ҳам хизмат қилади.

«Lord helps those who help themselves» - «На бога надейся, а сам не плошай»

«Man proposes but God disposes» - «Инсон тахмин қилади, худо буюради»

«Like priest, like people» - Авлиё ота қандай бўлса, одамлар ҳам шундай.

«Needs must when the devil drives» - Шайтон қувганда мажбур бўласан (т. е. против необходимости ничего не поделаешь) – «Плетью обуха не перешибешь»

«Open not your door when the devil knocks» - Остонада шайтон турганда эшикни очма.

«Set a beggar on horseback and he'll ride to the devil» - «Чўчқани кўрпачага ўтказсанг, оёғини дастурхонга қўяди»

⁶ www.learn-english-today.com/Proverbs/proverbs.html

«Speak of the devil and he will appear» - «Бўрини гапирса қулоғи кўринади»;

«The devil is not so black as he is painted» - «Шайтон уни тасвирлашганларидек қўрқинчли эмас»

«The devil knows many things because he is old» - – «Старый волк знает толк»

«The devil lurks behind the cross» - За распятием сатана прячется –«Мулла айтгани қилу, қилганин қилма», “Ўғри қариса, мулла бўлади”

2. *Commercialism*

It has historically developed so, that London, capital of the Great Britain, is the world's financial centre. In London there is the world's largest stock exchange. Probably, it caused presence of set of phraseological units, proverbs and sayings with a keyword «money» ("money") and for a theme of the finance in general in English language:

«He hasn't a penny to his name» (сўзма сўз «Унинг пеннисини ҳам йўқ») - «Мирисини ҳам йўқ»

«Penny and penny laid up will be many» (сўзма сўз «Тома тома кўл бўлур») - «1 тийин ҳам пул»,

«Time is money» - “Вақт – пул дегани»

«No bees, no honey; no work, no money» (сўзма сўз «Асаларисиз асал бўлмайди, меҳнатсиз пул») - «Меҳнат қилмасанг дўлана қайда»;

«It is better to be born lucky than rich» (сўзма сўз «Бой бўлиб туғилгандан кўра омадли бўлиб туғилган яхши») – «Кўзи ғилай бўлса ҳам бой гапирсин»

«Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise» (сўзма сўз «Эрта ухлаб эрта уйғониш, одамни соғлом, бой, ва ақлли қилади») – «Эрта турганга худо беради»

«A beggar can never be bankrupt» (сўзма сўз «камбағал ҳеч қачон қасот бўлмади»)

«A fool and his money are soon parted» (сўзма сўз «Ахмоқ пулга ёлчимади»)

«A penny saved is a penny earned» (сўзма сўз «Бир пенни тежаганинг бир пенни ишлаганингдир»)

3. The basic direction of development

As the Great Britain – is the industrial country, in English language there are the proverbs and sayings of which the basic theme is the industry. For example:

«To carry coals to Newcastle» - Ньюкасл кўмир ташимоқ– or in Russian «Ездить в Тулу со своим самоваром»

4. Traditions

Speaking about English traditions, it is necessary to mention, that the drink most used in England is tea. Englishmen think much of preparation of tea and for tea drinking process. Thereof in English language, there are some proverbs and sayings with a word-combination «cup of tea»:

an old cup of tea – қари кампир

an unpleasant cup of tea – ёқимсиз киши

to be one's cup of tea – ёқтирмақ

«A storm in a teacup» - «Пиёладаги тўфон»⁷

⁷ www.learn-english-today.com/Proverbs/proverbs.html

CONCLUSION

Proverbs in English add meaning to a plain conversation. There is mirth, emotion, vengeance and also the fun element in the proverbs. It would be a nice idea to introduce the subject to little kids. Most fables and moral stories have the punch line as a proverb. It is amazing the proverbs have been influenced with several cultural styles and yet retain their uniqueness. To make a subject emphatic, at get togethers and reunions, proverbs offer much solutions when emotions are to be expressed the highest.

The common proverbs that is of conversational use is, ‘A stitch in time saves nine. If a tear is mended at the right time, it does not expand to become a useless piece of cloth’.

‘Birds of a feather flock together’ and ‘ Like minds think alike’ have similar notations.

‘Where there is a will, there is a way’ is a common saying which talks about the determination required to surmount problems.

Healthy eating habits can be mentioned, ‘ An apple a day, keeps the doctor away’. It is in ones best interests to realize an opportunity and grab it. This is highlighted in ‘Time and tide wait for none.

Another common phrase is, ‘ Call a spade a spade’ wherein the frankness and genuine nature of a person is emphasized.

If there are avoidable situation there is no merit in proving your courage, which is seen in ‘ Discretion is the better part of valour’.

‘Do not put all eggs in one basket’ is true when you are just happy in mere collection of items rather than looking for other interests.

‘Every cloud has a silver lining’ is a great proverb to cheer someone who has lost interest in the zest of life while facing hardships.

‘Penny wise pound foolish’, is another proverb which mentions careless spending and poor financing powers of a person.

The quality of sharing and giving is learnt in a family. Before teaching the child to give to others, make sure that they understand the importance in ‘ Charity begins at home’.

‘Empty vessels makes the most noise’ is better explained in another proverb like, ‘Idle mind is devils workshop’.

A bad situation is expressed in ‘ From the frying pan to the fire’ where the current phase is worse than the earlier one.

‘Out of sight is out of mind’ is a perfect proverb to have forgotten the people whom we do not meet often.

‘Two is company, three is crowd’ is another proverb that hints at limiting your close contacts.

Finally the truth of life is seen in understanding the proverb, ‘ You cannot have a cake and eat it too’.

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