

# Approaches to The Study of Paremiological Units: Methods of Application in Language Teaching

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**Abstract:** This article provides a critical overview of scholarly approaches to the study of proverbs and outlines the author's own integrated perspective. Four main approaches are distinguished in the analysis of proverbs: functional, structural-semiotic, cognitive (cognitive-conceptual), and linguocultural. The study conducts a comparative analysis of these approaches, examines their relevance in proverb research, and proposes an integrated framework that considers proverbs as holistic entities in terms of meaning, structure, and cultural context.

**Keywords:** Paremiology, folklore studies, linguistics, functional approach.

**Introduction:** In the 1960s, a structural or structural-semiotic approach began to be applied in the study of proverbs in folkloristics. This approach emerged on the basis of methods from neighboring disciplines that were rapidly developing at the time – semiotics of linguistics and text linguistics – and is grounded in the concept of semioticity, particularly the semiotic nature of the text. World paremiologists (Z. Kanyó, M. Kuusi, V. Voigt, A. Szemerényi, and others) reached the conclusion that proverb texts possess a multi-layered structural plan. For instance, M. Kuusi examines the proverb from three perspectives: a) basic content (Idee), b) structure (Struktur), and c) constructive core (Baukern). Hungarian scholars A. Szemerényi and V. Voigt identified that the proverb has three main components: form, meaning, and usage. Thus, it was determined that similarities and differences exist in the division of proverbs across various structural levels.

The structural-semiotic approach in paremiology was formed and developed on the basis of the fundamental ideas of G.L. Permyakov. Throughout his research, Permyakov provided a scientific substantiation of the logical-semiotic essence of these folklore texts. The scholar focused on the tripartite (trillogical) nature of

proverbs and clearly distinguished the following aspects: firstly, proverbs as a unique phenomenon of the language system; secondly, as a linguistic unit expressing a logical judgment; thirdly, as an artistic miniature that generalizes and models real-life facts. Permyakov introduced into scholarly discourse a fundamentally new method of systematizing small folklore genres, particularly proverbs. His approach was aimed at explaining not only the structure and semiotics of proverbs but also their functional essence, serving as a theoretical foundation for subsequent paremiological research.

Upon detailed analysis, it is observed that folklore genres do not fully conform to the tripartite classification of literary genres (epic, lyric, drama), and this, in fact, constitutes one of the main characteristics distinguishing folklore from written literature. The crux of the matter lies in the fact that while certain genres of folklore are intrinsically connected with various rituals and labor processes, others require specific performance methods adapted to strict singing and dance. This situation, in turn, necessitates the study of genres not only from the perspective of content but also in terms of their performance characteristics and

functional roles. From this aspect, they can be classified into the following two fundamental groups:

- a) Ritual folklore genres;
- b) Non-ritual folklore genres.

Furthermore, taking into account the intended audience of folklore works, they can also be divided into two categories: adult folklore and children's folklore. However, considering the structure, ideological-artistic features, methods of reflecting reality, and scope of content of children's folklore genres (lullaby, soothing song, calming rhyme, teasing rhyme, response rhyme, pleading rhyme, judgment rhyme, squealing rhyme, mimicking rhyme, mocking rhyme, calling rhyme, restriction rhyme, counting rhyme, dismissal rhyme, tongue twister, riddle, onomatopoeic rhyme, and others), they can be classified under one of the three main literary genres. Thus, the principle of dividing belles-lettres into three genres can be applied to folklore materials as well, with certain exceptions. The folklore system essentially consists of the following three main genres and their corresponding subgenres:

Epic genre (mythos, myth, legend, tale, anecdote, joke, fairy tale, folk epic verse, epic poem, and historical song);

Lyric genre (almost all genres of ritual folklore, all types of children's folklore, all internal varieties of song, ashula [traditional Uzbek song], and others);

Dramatic genre (oral drama, puppet theater, askiya [wit competition], lof [boasting narrative], and others) .

In folklore studies, proverbs, riddles, superstitions, and \*yumuq\* expressions—traditionally classified as "small genres"—are considered to belong to the paremiological type. However, the renowned scholar B. Sarimsakov emphasizes the necessity of distinguishing them as a "special type" (or "special category"). According to him, these genres differ significantly from other paremic forms in terms of their unique compositional structure, functional characteristics, and usage in speech. Sarimsakov's approach is further extended, as he proposes that genres associated with communicative practices such as curses, swearing, and blessings should also be studied within this "special type." He argues that these genres possess distinctive features not only in terms of lexical semantics but also in their pragmatic (practical) functions in speech .

According to folklorist V.E. Gusev, genres such as proverbs and riddles should be studied within the epic genre. If one takes into account that folklore genres sometimes exhibit characteristics of two or even three literary genres, then proverbs and riddles—given that they sometimes appear in prose form, sometimes in poetic form, or depending on their content—can easily be considered as belonging to one or another literary genre.

However, considering that these works constitute a unique form of verbal art in terms of form, content, and length, and that the artistic text forms the core component of any genre, it is scientifically expedient to study them within a distinct paremic type. Furthermore, taboos (prohibitions) are also paremic phenomena that express the essence of moral-spiritual norms tested over centuries in folk life. Therefore, it would be appropriate to regard taboos as an independent genre belonging to the paremic type.

In folklore studies, phenomena such as lyric-epic songs or fairy-tale legends are sometimes mentioned as inter-type or inter-genre transitional forms. However, in reality, such phenomena are not widespread in folklore. For this reason, they cannot be incorporated into the main system of folklore genre classification. Such mixed or intermediary genres have never possessed stable permanence nor played a decisive role in the historical development of folklore. The development of types and genres is primarily marked by the emergence of new artistic forms and the gradual disappearance of old ones, while intermediary examples hold only marginal significance.

One of the key factors in the emergence, formation, and development of folklore genres is the necessity of social need. Reality itself is rich in diverse images, creating the need for folk creativity to adequately express its ideological-educational and aesthetic essence. For instance, the struggle of our ancestors against invaders gave rise to legends or heroic epics, while their helplessness before the forces of nature led to the formation of genres based on the magic of words.

The level of development of folk artistic thought also plays a significant role in the emergence of a particular genre. For example, in the early stages of human spiritual development, due to the lack of capacity to create complex artistic forms, simple and concise forms

emerged first, and later, as they evolved, larger and more complex genres took shape. Thus, the stabilization of genres is a natural and regular process, developing in accordance with both socio-historical factors and the internal laws of folkloric development.

The phenomenon of genre in folklore does not fully correspond to that in written literature; they differ in a number of fundamental respects. In written literature, the phenomenon of genre is primarily defined by two aspects:

- a) Possession of a distinctive scope of life coverage;
- b) Manifestation within an integrated artistic system.

As V.Y. Propp emphasized, the folklore genre is characterized by four main features:

Manifestation as an integrated literary system — possessing a specific structure and compositional framework;

Orientation toward everyday life or possession of a special functional purpose — fulfilling a clear practical function in daily life;

Having a distinct performance form — a particular verbal or musical performance style;

Organic connection with music — in many cases, the presence of melody, singing, or rhythmic elements .

In written literature genres, there is generally no orientation toward everyday life nor a specific performance context. For example, it is difficult to read a short story or a novel at a wedding ceremony, while reading a narrative at a mourning ceremony outside of that context would be odd. However, a wedding ceremony cannot be imagined without songs and dance, nor a mourning ceremony without lamentation and sorrow. This situation clearly demonstrates the ritualistic and functional character of folklore works. In French folklore, the entire body of existing genres constitutes a unified artistic system formed historically. This system was built upon the complex and distinctive interrelations and influences among different types of works. The formation and existence of a genre system is considered one of the most important laws of folklore development.

Proverbs are directed toward the listener—that is, they have their own audience. The orientation or intended audience of these texts can be determined based on features within the text itself, in its content and

structure. The orientation of the text and the functions of the folklore text are not identical concepts. Text function, as a pragmatic category, does not possess specific textual indicators—neither in terms of content nor structure. It is related to the situational use of the text .

The main pragmatic functions of proverbs are didactic (instructive) and evaluative functions. The instruction is typically given in relation to a specific fact of practical life; for instance, the sender may disapprove of the actions of a particular participant in the situation. The action may manifest in speech, emotions, deeds, and so on. The proverb thus functions as a moral instruction that affirms or rejects a specific behavioral stereotype.

The pragmatic intention of a proverb text is determined by its semantics (content) and modality (grammatical). The content of a proverb makes it possible to relate it to a particular speech situation. Applying proverbs to different situations sometimes leads to changes not only in their form (the surface level of the text) but also in their semantics (the deep level of the text), which means that the function of the proverb may also change.

Researchers refer to their approach as "linguocultural," relying on the idea of the interconnection between language and culture. This approach aims to determine the ability of signs to reflect the contemporary cultural self-awareness of a people, to view this as the foundation of their mentality, and to express it in the living usage of various texts. Proverbs are regarded as texts that reflect ethnic culture and the mentality of a people. At the same time, researchers draw on concepts and terms from cognitive linguistics, such as "concept," "consciousness," "mentality," and others.

Over the past twenty years, cognitive research has expanded its problem areas to such an extent that it would now be more accurate to speak of a cognitive approach applied across various philological studies, including those devoted to diverse linguistic phenomena as well as texts. A review of research conducted within cognitive linguistics and the linguocultural direction shows that folk proverbs have been studied primarily as objects reflecting conceptual knowledge. The cognitive approach can be applied to the analysis of folklore texts and to the identification of their genre characteristics. Within the framework of

these approaches, issues related to the study of the content aspects of proverb texts may become particularly relevant.

Each researcher, depending on the aims and objectives of their work, examines the material in their own unique way. Since Altai folk proverbs have not been studied comprehensively, in our work we have attempted to develop our own approach—one that takes into account the potential of all the approaches examined above—and that allows us to reveal the poetics of this genre while considering all the functional aspects of proverb texts.

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