

Semantic And Pragmatic Aspects Of Proverbs And Sayings

Ibodova Malika Gulmurodovna

2nd year basic doctoral student of Karshi State University, Uzbekistan

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Abstract: This article examines the semantic and pragmatic dimensions of proverbs and sayings as fundamental units of the phraseological system of language. Using the method of literature analysis and personal analytical interpretation, the study explores how proverbs and sayings function both as carriers of fixed meaning and as dynamic communicative tools in discourse. The analysis reveals that the boundary between proverbs and sayings is often fluid, and their pragmatic force depends significantly on contextual, cultural, and situational factors.

Keywords: Proverbs, sayings, semantics, pragmatics, phraseology, paremiology, figurative meaning, communicative function, cross-linguistic analysis.

Introduction: Proverbs and sayings constitute one of the oldest and most universal layers of any language's phraseological fund. The collective folk wisdom which developed over many centuries produced these linguistic forms that contain cultural values and behavioral rules and common human experience patterns in their compact memorization forms. The basic structure of paremiological units appears simple but their actual complexity requires study through modern semantics and pragmatics research. The study of how people understand proverbs and sayings and how these expressions change meaning through actual communication situations continues to be an active research area in linguistics.

Multiple elements need evaluation to determine the importance of this research. First, the distinction between proverbs (maqollar) and sayings (matallar) remains theoretically unresolved in many linguistic traditions, including Uzbek linguistics, where, as noted in the National Encyclopedia of Uzbekistan, sentence-form sayings are frequently classified alongside proverbs due to their structural similarity [1]. Second, traditional phraseological studies have dedicated their research efforts to examining unit structure and lexical aspects, whereas Central Asian linguistics research has

not yet studied how speakers use these units for communicative purposes, which include persuasion and evaluation and humor and indirect criticism. Third, researchers can gain insight into the relationship between universal cognitive patterns and specific cultural ways of expressing figurative language through their examination of proverbs and sayings across different languages.

METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The study employs an analytical methodology which evaluates scholarly research from phraseology and paremiology and their semantics and pragmatics and combines this information with the author's own analysis of paremiological data from Uzbek Russian and English languages. The theoretical foundation of the study rests on several major scholarly traditions. The classification system which V.V. Vinogradov developed for Russian and Soviet linguistics established a foundation that enables researchers to identify fixed expressions according to their degree of semantic fusion between different components [2]. The tradition received new development through G.L. Permyakov's paremiological research which established a structural-semantic typology of proverbs and sayings that uses logical models to show their figurative meaning

because he claimed that paremiological units from various languages maintain identical deep-structural patterns which differ only in surface appearance [3]. The Western tradition demonstrated a strong interest in the pragmatic aspect of proverbs through N. Norrick's research which showed that proverbs function in discourse not merely as repositories of fixed wisdom but as flexible rhetorical tools whose illocutionary force — whether advisory, warning, consoling, or ironic — is determined by the context of their use [4]. A.P. Mieder established through his detailed research on modern proverb usage that speakers actively change proverbs by altering their forms to create new ways of communicating [5].

The examination of proverbs and sayings in Uzbek linguistics has existed since ancient times because scholars like Sh. Shoabdurahmonov and others studied the grammatical and semantic aspects of Uzbek proverbs through their research on phraseological elements [6]. The Uzbek language explanatory dictionary defines saying (*matal*) as a figurative expression which lacks the ability to deliver a full independent meaning through its examples of "qizil qor yoqqanda" (when red snow falls) and "tuyaning dumi yerga tekkanda" (when the camel's tail touches the ground) which represent this particular type of saying [7]. The National Encyclopedia of Uzbekistan defines sayings as linguistic units which can exist as complete statements or multiple statements and which use artistic techniques that include simile, comparison, irony, and allegory with the following examples "Shamol bo'lmasa, daraxtning shoxi qimirlamas" (If there is no wind, the branch of the tree does not move) and "Qizim, senga aytaman, kelinim, sen eshit" (Daughter, I am telling you; daughter-in-law, you listen) [1]. The existing difference between two definitions shows an essential challenge which exists within Uzbek paremiology because different authoritative sources create inconsistent methods to establish the boundary between proverbs and sayings while most people treat sentence-form sayings as proverbs.

Its semantic meaning creates its main distinction which separates proverbs from sayings. A proverb is a syntactically complete sentence that expresses a generalized proposition which consists of a judgment and a piece of advice and a moral observation whose meaning derives from the literal meanings of its

component words. The Uzbek proverb "Mehnat qilsang, eminsan" (If you labor, you are safe) and the English equivalent "No pain, no gain" both articulate a complete thought with clear didactic content. A saying exists as an incomplete expression which requires larger utterance context to achieve its full meaning. The Russian saying "когда рак на горе свистнет" (when the crayfish whistles on the mountain) functions as an expressive adverbial modifier which means "never" [8] according to the Uzbek expression "qizil qor yoqqanda." The most widely accepted method to differentiate proverbs from sayings across various language groups uses this semantic incompleteness. The literature demonstrates that this method produces inconsistent results when applied to cases that exist between these two categories.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study of the examined literary works together with the proverbs and sayings collected from literary sources reveals important findings about the meaning and usage of proverbs and sayings. Proverbs function through established patterns of general reference because they express truth about every category of situations which they describe while their truth value exists as a customary truth not as an unchangeable fact. The English proverb "A rolling stone gathers no moss" does not refer to any particular stone but encodes a generalized behavioral observation applicable to a wide range of human situations — restlessness, lack of commitment, or constant change [9]. The Uzbek proverb "Mushuk tekinga oftobga chiqmaydi" (A cat does not go out into the sun for free) expresses self-interested motivation as a general truth which people use to create both funny remarks and serious social critiques [1]. The semantic mechanism at work in such cases is metaphorical mapping because the actual situation (a cat, the sun) functions as the source domain and human self-interest functions as the target domain whereas listeners must execute mental processing to understand the proverb.

The generalizing function cannot be executed by sayings because they require separate processes to achieve this task. The primary meaning of this word exhibits two functions through its capacity to express emotions and make value judgments about things. The saying "Qil uchida turibman" (I am standing on the tip of a hair) which Uzbek speakers use, creates a personal

state for the speaker which the saying describes through its specific description of their extreme precariousness or anxiety state [7]. The expression functions as an intensifier which serves to express emotions while it maintains its role as a separate speech function. Norrick's observation establishes a distinction between proverbs which function as independent illocutionary acts and sayings which affect the illocutionary acts that speakers use through their spoken language.

The analysis demonstrates that proverbs function as highly adaptable tools which people use for communication purposes. The same proverb can function as a directive which tells listeners how to behave or as a commissive which shows the speaker's dedication to a specific principle or as a representative which presents an overall truth or as an expressive which shows the speaker's feelings about a situation. The Russian proverb "Тише едешь — дальше будешь" (The slower you go, the further you get) serves three different functions: it provides authentic advice in one situation, it serves as ironic commentary in another situation, and it operates as a self-consoling reflection in yet another situation. The multiple functions of proverbs create a distinctive feature that separates them from the majority of established expressions. Sayings exhibit a narrower pragmatic range, typically functioning as expressive-evaluative elements that add vividness, humor, or emotional coloring to an utterance without independently performing a speech act. The saying "Semizlikni qo'y ko'taradi" (The sheep carries the fatness) functions as a figurative description within an utterance which the speaker uses to create a figurative description instead of giving advice or warning or declaring something.

A particularly important discovery from cross-linguistic studies shows that proverbs and sayings maintain a permanent boundary which remains in existence throughout time. Units that function as sayings in one communicative context may be elevated to proverb status in another through recontextualization, and vice versa. The classification system displays its actual power because it handles the living nature of paremiological units which function as active elements in discourse instead of existing as unchanging dictionary definitions. The National Encyclopedia documents an Uzbek linguistic tradition which treats

sentence-form sayings as proverbs yet this practice shows how people actually use these two categories of language.

CONCLUSION

The analysis conducted in this article demonstrates that proverbs and sayings, despite their apparent simplicity, represent semantically and pragmatically complex linguistic phenomena that operate at the intersection of fixed meaning and dynamic communicative function. Proverbs are distinguished by their semantic completeness, generalized propositional content, and pragmatic polyfunctionality, enabling them to serve as autonomous speech acts adaptable to diverse communicative purposes. Sayings, by contrast, are characterized by semantic incompleteness and a predominantly expressive-evaluative pragmatic role, functioning as embedded modifiers rather than independent communicative units. The cross-linguistic comparison of Uzbek, Russian, and English paremiological material confirms that while these general principles hold across languages, the specific boundary between proverbs and sayings remains fluid and context-dependent. Future research in this area would benefit from corpus-based pragmatic analysis of proverb and saying usage in naturally occurring discourse, which would provide empirical grounding for the theoretical observations developed in the present study.

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