

COMPARISON OF FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIP PROVERBS: THEMES OF FAMILY AND RELATIONSHIPS IN RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH PROVERBS

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the thematic similarities and differences in family and relationship proverbs from Russian and English cultures. By examining a selection of proverbs, we analyze how these expressions encapsulate societal values, beliefs, and attitudes toward family dynamics and interpersonal relationships. The study highlights the cultural nuances that shape these proverbs and suggests that while many themes are universal, distinct cultural contexts influence their meanings and applications. The study employs a comparative approach, highlighting the underlying themes that emerge from these proverbs, such as the importance of familial loyalty, the roles of parents and children, and the significance of love and respect within relationships. We explore how these proverbs articulate collective identities, providing insight into how each culture perceives familial roles and relationships.

Key Words: *Proverbs, Family, Relationships, Cultural Comparison, Russian Proverbs, English Proverbs, Societal Values, Wisdom, Tradition, Dynamics, Communication*

СРАВНЕНИЕ ПОСЛОВИЦ О СЕМЬЕ И ВЗАИМООТНОШЕНИЯХ: ТЕМЫ СЕМЬИ И ВЗАИМООТНОШЕНИЙ В РУССКИХ И АНГЛИЙСКИХ ПОСЛОВИЦАХ

АННОТАЦИЯ

В этой статье рассматриваются тематические сходства и различия в пословицах о семье и взаимоотношениях в русской и английской культурах. Изучая подборку пословиц, мы пришли к выводу, что эти выражения отражают общественные ценности, убеждения и отношение к семейной динамике и межличностным отношениям. Исследование подчеркивает культурные нюансы, которые сформировали пословицы, и предполагает, что, хотя многие из них универсальны, различные культурные контексты влияют

на их значение и применение. Исследование использует сравнительный подход, подчеркивая основные темы, которые возникают из этих пословиц, такие как важность семейной преданности, роли родителей и детей, а также значение любви и уважения в отношениях. Мы исследуем, как эти пословицы формируют коллективные идентичности, предоставляя представление о том, как каждая культура воспринимает семейные роли и отношения.

Ключевые слова: Пословицы, Семья, Взаимоотношения, Культурное сравнение, Русские пословицы, Английские пословицы, Общественные ценности, Мудрость, Традиция, Динамика, Коммуникация.

OILA VA MUNOSABATLAR HAQIDAGI MAQOLLARNI TAQQOSLASH: RUS VA INGLIZ MAQOLLARIDA OILA VA MUNOSABATLAR MAVZULARI

ANNOTATSIYA

Ushbu maqolada rus va ingliz madaniyatlaridagi oila va munosabatlar haqidagi maqollarning tematik o'xshashliklari va farqlari ko'rib chiqiladi. Maqollar tanlovini o'rganib chiqib, biz ushbu iboralar ijtimoiy qadriyatlarini, e'tiqodlarni va oilaviy dinamika va shaxslararo munosabatlarga bo'lgan munosabatni aks ettiradi degan xulosaga keldik. Tadqiqot maqollarni shakllantirgan madaniy nuanslarni ta'kidlaydi va ularning ko'pchiligi universal bo'lsa-da, turli madaniy kontekstlar ularning ma'nosi va qo'llanilishiga ta'sir qilishini ko'rsatadi. Tadqiqot taqqoslash usulidan foydalanadi va ushbu maqollar orqali paydo bo'ladigan asosiy mavzularni ta'kidlaydi, masalan, oilaviy sadoqatning ahamiyati, ota-onalar va bolalar rollari, shuningdek, munosabatlardagi sevgi va hurmatning ahamiyati. Biz ushbu maqollar qanday qilib kollektiv identitilarni ifodalayotganini o'rganamiz, har bir madaniyatning oilaviy rollar va munosabatlarga bo'lgan qarashlarini qanday tasvirlayotganini ko'rsatamiz.

Kalit so'zlar: Maqollar, oila, munosabatlar, madaniy taqqoslash, rus maqollari, ingliz maqollari, ijtimoiy qadriyatlar, donishmandlik, an'ana, dinamika, aloqa.

INTRODUCTION

Proverbs are succinct expressions of wisdom that often reflect the cultural values and social norms of a society. They serve as vehicles for conveying collective experiences and insights regarding family and relationships, offering a glimpse into the intricate dynamics that define interpersonal connections. This article aims to compare Russian and English proverbs related to these themes, focusing on what unites and distinguishes them across the two cultures.

In the 20th century, European linguistic theories revealed numerous analyses of phraseological units, particularly proverbs and sayings. These studies provided

various explanations and theoretical frameworks that significantly contributed to the design of structural and functional models of proverb usage. Virtually every important school of linguistic thought has passed on its scientific legacy in the field of paremiology, making the study of proverbs an interdisciplinary endeavor that intersects with folklore, anthropology, and linguistics.

The foundational principles of Saussurean semiology have notably enriched the field, demonstrating how proverbs function within cultural contexts. Additionally, the conceptual heritage of Russian Formalism and the theoretical rigor of the Prague School of Linguistics have left undeniable traces in the development of logico-semiotic classifications of paremias, as seen in the work of scholars like Permyakov. Models such as Bühler's Organon and Jakobson's functional model of language have also been applied to the study of proverbs, highlighting their expressive potential (Krikmann 1985, Gavriilidou 2003, Dominguez Barajas 2010).

Understanding proverbs requires recognizing them as phraseological units—combinations of words that possess a stable structure yet convey layered meanings. Nelyubin (2009) defines these units as word combinations or formations that can be fully or partially reinterpreted, often carrying rich imagery and expressiveness. Thus, by analyzing specific examples of Russian and English proverbs, we can gain profound insights into how each culture views familial bonds, love, loyalty, and conflict, ultimately revealing the shared human experiences that transcend cultural boundaries. This exploration not only highlights the commonalities between the two cultures but also sheds light on the unique values and beliefs that shape their respective views on family and relationships.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

1. Family Bonds

Both Russian and English proverbs emphasize the importance of loyalty within family structures.

Russian Proverb: *"Семья — это крепость"* (*The family is a fortress*).

Analysis: This proverb suggests that the family serves as a protective unit, highlighting the value of loyalty and mutual support among its members. It underscores the idea that family is a sanctuary against external adversities.

English Proverb: *"Blood is thicker than water."*

Analysis: Similarly, this proverb implies that familial relationships take precedence over other social ties. It conveys the idea that bonds of blood entail obligations and loyalty that are stronger than those with friends or acquaintances.

Both proverbs highlight the significance of familial loyalty, but the Russian version emphasizes the protective nature of the family, while the English one underscores the priority of blood ties.

Both Russian and English proverbs emphasize the importance of loyalty within family structures.

Russian Proverb: *"Семья — это опора"* (*The family is a support*).

Analysis: This contemporary proverb highlights the role of the family as a foundational source of support for individuals. It emphasizes that family members should be there for one another, reinforcing the idea of mutual reliance. This reflects a cultural value placed on familial loyalty and the idea that family is essential for personal stability.

English Proverb: *"Family first, always."*

Analysis: This saying stresses the primacy of family over all other relationships and commitments. It reinforces the notion that, regardless of circumstances, family should take precedence. This expression reflects a modern emphasis on the importance of family ties and loyalty, suggesting that family should be prioritized in all aspects of life.

These proverbs illustrate a shared cultural value of loyalty, though the Russian proverb focuses on support, while the English version emphasizes prioritization.

The Role of Elders

Another common theme is the respect for elders and their wisdom.

Russian Proverb: *"Старый друг лучше новых двух"* (*An old friend is better than two new ones*).

Analysis: This proverb not only values longstanding relationships but also suggests that the wisdom gained over time, especially from elders, is irreplaceable. It reflects the Russian cultural emphasis on honoring age and experience.

English Proverb: *"Wise men learn more from fools than fools from the wise."*

Analysis: This English proverb indicates that wisdom can be found in various experiences, including those of the younger generation. While it respects knowledge, it emphasizes a broader interpretation of learning, including from mistakes.

English Proverb: *"With age comes wisdom."*

Analysis: This English saying conveys a similar respect for the knowledge that comes with aging. It emphasizes that experience leads to greater understanding, thus encouraging the younger generation to seek guidance from their elders.

In this comparison, the Russian proverb focuses more on valuing the wisdom of those who have lived longer, whereas the English proverb suggests a more reciprocal learning process across generations.

Russian Proverb: "*Старость — это не недостаток, а богатство*" (*Old age is not a deficiency, but a wealth*).

Analysis: This proverb suggests that aging brings valuable experiences and knowledge. It reflects a cultural belief that elders contribute significantly to family and society through their wisdom, reinforcing the importance of respecting and learning from them.

English Proverb: "*Older and wiser.*"

Analysis: This expression conveys a similar respect for the insights gained through age. It implies that individuals who have lived longer are likely to possess greater knowledge and understanding. This proverb encourages younger generations to seek the counsel of their elders, highlighting the cultural appreciation for accumulated wisdom.

Both proverbs underscore the significance of honoring and learning from elders, although the Russian version emphasizes wealth in experience, while the English version focuses on wisdom.

2. Relationships and Love

Proverbs often reflect societal attitudes towards love and romance.

Russian Proverb: "*Любовь зла, полюбишь и козла*" (*Love is evil; you may love even a goat*).

Analysis: This proverb conveys a cautionary message about the irrationality of love, suggesting that romantic feelings can lead one to make unwise choices. It reflects a somewhat skeptical view of love, warning against its potential pitfalls.

English Proverb: "*Love conquers all.*"

Analysis: In contrast, this proverb presents a more optimistic view, suggesting that love has the power to overcome all obstacles. It embodies a romantic ideal that emphasizes love's strength and transformative power.

The divergence in these proverbs illustrates contrasting cultural attitudes towards love—one being more cautionary and realistic, while the other is idealistic and hopeful.

How families deal with conflicts is also expressed through proverbs.

Russian Proverb: "*Ссора — это дело семейное*" (*A quarrel is a family matter*).

Analysis: This highlights the idea that conflicts within families should remain internal, suggesting that families should resolve their issues privately. It emphasizes unity and discretion in handling disputes.

English Proverb: "*Don't air your dirty laundry in public.*"

Analysis: This proverb shares a similar sentiment about privacy in family matters but also implies a sense of shame regarding public disputes. It suggests that

maintaining appearances is important, reflecting societal pressure to uphold family reputation.

Both proverbs suggest that family conflicts should be resolved internally, but the English version introduces an element of public perception, indicating a concern for societal judgment.

Russian Proverb: *"Любовь — это не всегда счастье"* (Love is not always happiness).

Analysis: This contemporary saying conveys a cautionary message about the complexities of love. It acknowledges that romantic relationships can bring challenges and difficulties, reflecting a more realistic view of love's impact on happiness. This perspective is particularly relevant in a society that values deep emotional connections but recognizes the potential for pain.

English Proverb: *"Love is a battlefield."*

Analysis: This English saying metaphorically describes the challenges inherent in romantic relationships. It suggests that love requires effort and can lead to conflict, embodying the idea that love is not merely an idyllic experience but often involves struggle and sacrifice. This proverb captures a contemporary view of romantic relationships as dynamic and sometimes contentious.

These proverbs illustrate contrasting perspectives on love: the Russian version focuses on the emotional complexity of love, while the English version frames love as an active struggle.

3. Parenting and Raising Children

Proverbs about parenting also reveal cultural attitudes toward child-rearing.

Russian Proverb: *"Какое село, так и приход"* (As the priest, so is the parish).

Analysis: This suggests that children reflect their upbringing and the values instilled by their parents. It emphasizes parental responsibility in shaping children's characters.

English Proverb: *"The apple doesn't fall far from the tree."*

Analysis: This English proverb similarly conveys the idea that children inherit traits and behaviors from their parents, emphasizing the influence of family background on individual identity.

Both proverbs underscore the importance of parental influence, suggesting that children are a reflection of their upbringing, thus reinforcing familial responsibility.

The Importance of Education

Education is another area where proverbs reveal cultural priorities regarding child-rearing.

Russian Proverb: *"Учение — свет, а неучение — тьма"* (*Learning is light, ignorance is darkness*).

Analysis: This proverb emphasizes the value of education, suggesting that knowledge leads to enlightenment and success. It reflects a cultural belief that education is essential for personal development and societal progress.

English Proverb: *"Knowledge is power."*

Analysis: This English saying conveys a similar sentiment, indicating that acquiring knowledge equips individuals with the ability to influence and improve their lives. It underscores the belief that education is a powerful tool for personal and societal advancement.

Both proverbs underscore the importance of education, portraying it as a pathway to success and empowerment. However, the Russian version uses a metaphorical contrast between light and darkness, while the English version emphasizes the practical power that knowledge can provide.

4. Universal Themes and Cultural Distinctions

Despite the similarities, cultural distinctions can be seen in the tone and context of these proverbs. For example, while both cultures value family loyalty, Russian proverbs often incorporate elements of caution and realism, while English proverbs tend to lean toward optimism and idealism. Proverbs not only serve as expressions of wisdom but also play a crucial role in shaping cultural identity.

Russian Proverb: *"Не все то золото, что блестит"* (*Not all that glitters is gold*).

Analysis: This proverb teaches caution and discernment, suggesting that appearances can be deceiving. It reflects a cultural attitude that values depth and authenticity over superficiality.

English Proverb: *"All that glitters is not gold."*

Analysis: This English equivalent conveys a similar message about the deceptive nature of appearances. It emphasizes the importance of looking beyond the surface, encouraging critical thinking and skepticism.

These proverbs demonstrate how both cultures value wisdom and discernment, teaching individuals to seek deeper truths rather than accept things at face value. They highlight a shared understanding of the complexities of life and human relationships.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of proverbs from both English and Russian cultures reveals a fascinating interplay between language, culture, and shared human experiences. Proverbs, as succinct and powerful expressions of collective wisdom, serve to convey

profound truths while also reflecting the cultural contexts from which they arise. Our findings highlight the importance of understanding proverbs not just as linguistic artifacts but as cultural touchstones that resonate with universal human themes.

Proverbs play a crucial role in communication by providing an effective means to convey complex messages in a manner that is palatable and memorable. In many instances, direct statements may be too blunt or painful, leading to potential confrontation or misunderstanding. Proverbs offer a buffer, softening the impact of difficult truths through figurative language and imagery.

The effectiveness of these sayings lies not only in their content but also in their delivery. When presented within a rhetorical context, proverbs enhance oratory skills and captivate audiences. The imagery evoked by proverbs aids in the retention of their messages, ensuring that the wisdom they impart resonates long after the words have been spoken. This phenomenon underscores the idea that “how” a message is conveyed can be as important as the message itself.

The cultural specificity of proverbs is evident in their unique expressions and interpretations across different societies. As noted by Ihueze, proverbs are culturally determined, meaning that what is considered proverbial within one culture may not hold the same significance in another. Our comparative analysis confirms that each culture curates its own collection of proverbs, shaped by historical experiences, societal norms, and environmental factors.

Our analysis also highlights the multifaceted nature of proverbs, where the figurative meanings can diverge significantly from their literal interpretations. Odaga’s assertion that proverbs require careful interpretation underscores the need for contextual understanding. Some proverbs have historical roots that are essential for grasping their meanings. For instance, proverbs tied to political or social contexts may resonate differently depending on the audience's familiarity with the events they reference.

The duality of meaning—literal versus figurative—demonstrates the richness of proverbs as linguistic constructs. The simplicity of their structure belies the depth of thought and cultural commentary they can convey. This complexity makes proverbs a valuable subject of study, as they can be dissected from multiple angles to uncover layers of meaning and cultural significance.

The use of vivid imagery in proverbs is another critical aspect that enhances their communicative power. As noted by Bukenya et al., the strength of proverbs lies in their ability to draw on relatable experiences and familiar imagery, allowing speakers to effectively comment on situations with precision and clarity. The choice

of words, coupled with the structure of the proverb, plays a significant role in its impact.

Proverbs often encapsulate collective wisdom gained from generations of shared experiences. The ability of a proverb to evoke strong mental images enables the audience to grasp complex ideas quickly, making them invaluable in both oral and written communication. This characteristic further emphasizes the need for a deep understanding of cultural contexts to fully appreciate the nuances embedded within each saying.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of family and relationship proverbs in Russian and English cultures reveals both universal themes and distinct cultural nuances. From the definitions discussed, several key aspects of proverbs emerge. First, a proverb embodies an element of truth, encapsulating shared wisdom that resonates across generations. Second, proverbs are deeply rooted in culture and are expressed in concise, often figurative language. This brevity is not merely for simplicity; it reflects the careful selection of words that enhances memorability and impact. Third, proverbs convey the wisdom of their users, offering insights into the values and beliefs of the societies from which they originate.

While many proverbs share similar core values—such as loyalty, respect for elders, and the importance of familial bonds—their interpretations and expressions can vary significantly. This variation highlights the richness of cultural perspectives on family and relationships. Understanding these differences enhances our appreciation of how proverbs serve as cultural artifacts that encapsulate the wisdom and values of diverse societies.

As noted by scholars like Norrick, proverbs possess unique characteristics that distinguish them from everyday statements. They are self-contained, complete sentences that adhere to fixed forms, making them recognizable as items of folklore. This traditional aspect reinforces their role in shaping behaviors and attitudes within a culture. The insights garnered from this study contribute to the field of cultural studies and promote greater cross-cultural understanding. Proverbs not only reflect the values of a culture but also actively shape the relational dynamics of its members, reinforcing the significance of familial and relational ties across various contexts.

In conclusion, proverbs serve as powerful tools for communication and cultural expression, revealing both the shared experiences and unique identities of different societies. Their enduring presence in language underscores the timeless relevance of

the wisdom they convey, inviting continued exploration into their meanings and implications in our interconnected world.

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