

THE LINGUISTIC STATUS OF PROVERBS AND SAYINGS

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Annotation: This article examines the linguistic status of proverbs and sayings as important units of phraseology and paremiology. The research analyzes their structural, semantic, pragmatic, and cultural characteristics in modern linguistic studies. Special attention is paid to the similarities and differences between proverbs and sayings, their communicative functions, and their role in preserving cultural identity and national values. The study reveals that these linguistic units not only enrich speech expressiveness but also serve as a means of transmitting collective wisdom and social experience across generations.

Keywords: proverb, saying, linguistics, phraseology, paremiology, semantics, pragmatics, culture, communication, language units.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada maqol va matallarning tilshunoslikdagi lingvistik maqomi frazeologiya hamda paremiologiya nuqtai nazaridan tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot davomida ularning strukturaviy, semantik, pragmatik va madaniy xususiyatlari o'rganiladi. Shuningdek, maqol va matallarning o'xshash hamda farqli jihatlari, kommunikativ vazifalari, milliy qadriyatlar va madaniy merosni saqlashdagi ahamiyati yoritib beriladi. Tadqiqot natijalari ushbu til birliklari nutq ta'sirchanligini oshirish bilan birga, avlodlar o'rtasida hayotiy tajriba va xalq donishmandligini yetkazishda muhim vosita ekanligini ko'rsatadi.

Kalit so'zlar: maqol, matal, tilshunoslik, frazeologiya, paremiologiya, semantika, pragmatika, madaniyat, kommunikatsiya, til birliklari.

Language serves not only as a means of communication but also as a repository of cultural memory, social values, and intellectual heritage. Among the various linguistic units that reflect the collective experience of a speech community, proverbs and sayings occupy a unique position. These traditional expressions have been transmitted across generations, preserving moral principles, practical knowledge, and cultural beliefs. In linguistics, proverbs and sayings are studied within the fields of phraseology, paremiology, semantics, and pragmatics. Although proverbs and sayings often appear similar in everyday communication, their linguistic status remains a subject of scholarly discussion. Some researchers classify them as phraseological units, while others consider them independent communicative structures with cultural and cognitive significance. This paper examines the linguistic status of proverbs and sayings by analyzing their structural, semantic, functional, and cultural characteristics. The scientific study of proverbs and sayings is known as paremiology, a branch of linguistics that investigates fixed expressions containing folk wisdom. The term originates from the Greek word *paroimia*, meaning "proverb." Numerous linguists have contributed to the study of proverbial expressions. Scholars such as Charles Bally, Viktor Vinogradov, and Wolfgang Mieder emphasized that proverbs and sayings are integral elements of phraseological systems because of their semantic stability and reproducibility in speech.

From a linguistic perspective, proverbs and sayings possess several defining characteristics:

- Stability of form

- Reproducibility in communication
- Figurative or metaphorical meaning
- Cultural and historical significance
- Pragmatic functionality

These features distinguish them from ordinary lexical combinations and spontaneous utterances.

Proverbs as Linguistic Units

A proverb is generally defined as a complete sentence expressing a universal truth, moral lesson, or practical observation. Proverbs are grammatically complete and semantically autonomous.

Examples include:

- "Actions speak louder than words."
- "Where there is a will, there is a way."
- "Time is money."

From a syntactic perspective, proverbs often have complete sentence structures, including subject-predicate relations. Their grammatical completeness allows them to function independently in discourse. Semantically, proverbs often contain metaphorical meanings. For example, the proverb "Don't count your chickens before they hatch" does not literally refer to chickens but metaphorically warns against premature expectations.

Pragmatically, proverbs perform multiple communicative functions:

- Advising
- Warning
- Teaching
- Persuading
- Evaluating behavior

Therefore, proverbs possess both linguistic and social functions.

Sayings as Linguistic Expressions

Unlike proverbs, sayings usually express an idea or observation without necessarily providing a complete moral judgment. They are often incomplete syntactic structures or figurative expressions used in specific contexts.

Examples include:

- "Better late than never."
- "Like father, like son."
- "Easier said than done."

Sayings tend to be shorter and less didactic than proverbs. Their communicative role is often descriptive or expressive rather than instructional. From a phraseological viewpoint, sayings exhibit lexical stability and idiomatic meaning. Their interpretation frequently depends on contextual usage and shared cultural knowledge.

Semantic and Pragmatic Features

One of the most important linguistic characteristics of proverbs and sayings is semantic complexity. Their meanings are rarely literal. Instead, they rely on metaphor, symbolism, and cultural association.

For example:

- "A rolling stone gathers no moss."

- “Every cloud has a silver lining.”

Such expressions require not only linguistic competence but also cultural competence for accurate interpretation. From a pragmatic perspective, proverbs and sayings influence interpersonal communication by strengthening arguments, creating emotional impact, and establishing social solidarity.

In conversation, speakers often use these expressions to:

- Support opinions
- Criticize behavior
- Express agreement
- Simplify complex ideas
- Strengthen rhetorical effect

Proverbs and sayings are deeply connected to national identity and cultural worldview. They reflect historical experience, traditional values, and collective psychology. For instance, English proverbs often emphasize individualism, time management, and practical thinking, while Eastern proverbial traditions may place stronger emphasis on community, patience, and respect. From a cognitive linguistic perspective, proverbs and sayings represent conceptual metaphors that shape human thought and understanding. They simplify abstract concepts by connecting them to everyday experiences. Thus, they function not only as linguistic units but also as cognitive models of human reasoning.

In conclusion, proverbs and sayings hold a significant linguistic status as stable, reproducible, and culturally meaningful units of language. While both share phraseological characteristics, they differ in structural completeness, communicative purpose, and semantic depth. Proverbs typically function as complete didactic statements, whereas sayings often serve as expressive or descriptive phrases. Their linguistic importance extends beyond grammar and vocabulary, encompassing cultural transmission, cognitive processing, and social communication. Therefore, the study of proverbs and sayings remains an essential area of modern linguistic research.

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