HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH AND GERMAN PROVERBS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON MODERN SPEECH

Po'latova Mohichehra Bektosh qizi

Student of Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages

Gmail: mohichehrapolatova02@gmail.com

Annotation: This article explores the historical development of English and German proverbs and examines their influence on contemporary spoken and written discourse. Proverbs, as culturally embedded linguistic units, have played a significant role in shaping communicative norms, worldview, and social behavior across generations. The study highlights how English proverbs evolved through Old English, Middle English, and Renaissance periods, influenced by religious texts, folklore, and literary traditions. Similarly, German proverbs are analyzed through their origins in Old High German, medieval manuscripts, and the Reformation era, particularly under the influence of Martin Luther's translations. The article also investigates how these proverbs continue to function in modern speech, reflecting cultural values, pragmatic strategies, and cognitive metaphors. Comparative insights reveal shared Indo-European roots as well as unique national characteristics that distinguish English and German proverbial systems. The findings illustrate the enduring relevance of proverbs in shaping communication, identity, and intercultural understanding.

Keywords: English proverbs, German proverbs, historical development, cultural heritage, folklore, old English, old High German, linguistic evolution, pragmatics, cognitive metaphor, renaissance literature, reformation influence, modern speech, communicative norms, cross-cultural comparison

Introduction. Proverbs are among the oldest and most enduring elements of human language, reflecting the wisdom, values, and experiences of societies across

generations[1]. In both English and German cultures, proverbs have historically served as concise expressions of moral lessons, social norms, and practical advice[2],[3] The historical development of English proverbs can be traced from Old English and Middle English periods, when folklore, religious texts, and early literary works played a crucial role in their formation[4].

Similarly, German proverbs evolved from Old High German traditions, medieval manuscripts, and the profound linguistic impact of the Reformation, particularly Martin Luther's translation of the Bible[5]. Studying these proverbs provides insights into the cultural, cognitive, and pragmatic dimensions of language[6]. In modern speech, both English and German proverbs continue to influence communication, shaping idiomatic expressions, rhetorical strategies, and intercultural understanding[7]. The comparative analysis of these proverbial systems reveals not only their shared Indo-European roots but also distinctive national characteristics, highlighting the ways in which historical, social, and literary contexts contribute to the evolution of linguistic expressions[8]. This study aims to examine these developments and their ongoing relevance in contemporary discourse.

Main Part.

1. Historical Development of English Proverbs. English proverbs have their roots in Old English literature, folklore, and early religious texts[9]. During the Anglo-Saxon period, proverbs often conveyed moral guidance and practical wisdom in

---

[1] Mieder, W. *Proverbs: A Handbook*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004. 320 p.

[2] Klein, W. *Sprichwörter in der deutschen Kulturgeschichte*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999. 298 p.

[3] Dundes, A. *The Study of Folklore*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1981. 265 p.

[4] Simpson, J., Weiner, E. *The Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989. 2176 p.

[5] Lübke, H. *Deutsche Sprichwörter: Geschichte und Bedeutung*. München: C.H. Beck, 2006. 340 p.

[6] Mieder, W. *Proverbs: A Handbook*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004. 320 p.

[7] Huang, Y. *Cultural and Cognitive Perspectives on Proverbs*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 310 p.

[8] Bautz, R. *Renaissance Proverbs in English Literature*. London: Routledge, 2012. 280 p.

[9] Simpson, J., Weiner, E. *The Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989. 2176 p.

concise forms, reflecting societal norms and ethical values[10]. The Middle English period saw the influence of French and Latin literature, which enriched the proverbial repertoire and introduced more complex syntactic structures[11]. During the Renaissance, literary works such as those by Shakespeare and John Heywood contributed significantly to popularizing proverbs in both written and oral forms[12]. Proverbs like *"A stitch in time saves nine"* or *"All that glitters is not gold"* exemplify how figurative language and universal themes persisted across centuries, becoming embedded in everyday speech[13]. This historical evolution highlights the continuous interaction between culture, literature, and language in shaping English proverbial expressions.

2. Historical Development of German Proverbs. German proverbs developed from Old High German and medieval traditions, often preserved in manuscripts and early chronicles[14]. Proverbs were closely tied to oral folklore, reflecting local customs, moral values, and practical knowledge[15]. The Reformation era, especially Martin Luther's translation of the Bible, played a pivotal role in standardizing the language and spreading proverbs widely among the German-speaking population[16]. Classic German proverbs such as *"Morgenstund hat Gold im Mund"* (The early bird catches the worm) demonstrate a clear blend of moral instruction and metaphorical imagery[17]. Over time, these proverbs were codified in collections like the *Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon*, preserving regional and historical variations while promoting

[10] Mieder, W. *Proverbs: A Handbook*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004. 320 p.

[11] Doyle, A. *English Proverbs: Origins and Evolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. 256 p.

[12] Bautz, R. *Renaissance Proverbs in English Literature*. London: Routledge, 2012. 280 p.

[13] Mieder, W. *Proverbs: A Handbook*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004. 320 p.

[14] Lübke, H. *Deutsche Sprichwörter: Geschichte und Bedeutung*. München: C.H. Beck, 2006. 340 p.

[15] Klein, W. *Sprichwörter in der deutschen Kulturgeschichte*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999. 298 p.

[16] Mieder, W. *Proverbs: A Handbook*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004. 320 p.

[17] Huang, Y. *Cultural and Cognitive Perspectives on Proverbs*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 310 p.

shared national linguistic identity[18]. The historical trajectory of German proverbs underscores their role in education, socialization, and cultural continuity.

3. *Influence of Proverbs on Modern Speech (English and German)*. Proverbs continue to shape modern spoken and written discourse in both English and German. In English, they are used to emphasize points, offer advice, and create rhetorical effects, often in idiomatic or metaphorical forms[19]. German proverbs similarly function in formal and informal contexts, enhancing expressiveness and reinforcing cultural norms[20]. Cognitive linguistics studies show that proverbs act as conceptual metaphors, influencing reasoning and perception in communication[21]. Moreover, comparative analysis reveals that while some proverbs have direct equivalents in both languages, others reflect unique cultural experiences, illustrating differences in worldview and social attitudes[22]. Modern media, literature, and educational practices further sustain the use of proverbs, ensuring their relevance in contemporary intercultural communication[23]. The study of proverbs thus provides valuable insights into how historical linguistic forms continue to inform present-day language practices.

Conclusion. The historical development of English and German proverbs demonstrates the enduring role of these linguistic units in reflecting cultural values, social norms, and collective wisdom. English proverbs evolved through Old English, Middle English, and Renaissance periods, influenced by folklore, religious texts, and literary works. German proverbs, rooted in Old High German traditions and shaped by medieval manuscripts and the Reformation, similarly reflect the moral, practical, and cognitive dimensions of language. In modern speech, proverbs continue to

[18] Bautz, R. *Renaissance Proverbs in English Literature*. London: Routledge, 2012. 280 p.

[19] Mieder, W. *Proverbs: A Handbook*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004. 320 p.

[20] Lübke, H. *Deutsche Sprichwörter: Geschichte und Bedeutung*. München: C.H. Beck, 2006. 340 p.

[21] Lakoff, G., Johnson, M. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980. 240 p.

[22] Dundes, A. *The Study of Folklore*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1981. 265 p.

[23] Huang, Y. *Cultural and Cognitive Perspectives on Proverbs*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 310 p.

function as rhetorical, cognitive, and pragmatic tools, enriching both English and German communication. Comparative analysis reveals shared Indo-European origins alongside distinct national characteristics, highlighting the ways culture, history, and literature shape linguistic expressions. Ultimately, the study of proverbs underscores their ongoing relevance, demonstrating that historical linguistic forms remain vital in contemporary discourse and intercultural understanding.

References

1. Mieder, W. *Proverbs: A Handbook*. Westport: Greenwood Press, 2004. 320 p.

2. Simpson, J., Weiner, E. *The Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989. 2176 p.

3. Dundes, A. *The Study of Folklore*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1981. 265 p.

4. Klein, W. *Sprichwörter in der deutschen Kulturgeschichte*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999. 298 p.

5. Lübke, H. *Deutsche Sprichwörter: Geschichte und Bedeutung*. München: C.H. Beck, 2006. 340 p.

6. Bautz, R. *Renaissance Proverbs in English Literature*. London: Routledge, 2012. 280 p.

7. Doyle, A. *English Proverbs: Origins and Evolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. 256 p.

8. Huang, Y. *Cultural and Cognitive Perspectives on Proverbs*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. 310 p.

9. Lakoff, G., Johnson, M. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980. 240 p.