

ENGLISH PROVERBS IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE AUDIENCE (TEACHING AND ASSESSING)

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Annotation: The article is devoted to the linguistic and methodological aspects of English proverbs in a foreign language audience. Proverbs, as paremiological units reflecting the history and culture of the people, are of great cognitive value. In the process of teaching the proverbs of the English language in the Russian-speaking and Turkic-speaking audience, one should also rely on comparative research, which helps to identify similarities and differences. The method of introducing proverbs of the English language into a foreign-language audience ends with an assessment of the students' knowledge, skills and abilities. Assessment methods and techniques are diverse: control questions, testing, tasks for speaking and writing, translation, etc. In the process of scientific research, such methods as descriptive, comparative, the method of control and assessment of knowledge were used.

Key words: proverb, English, teaching, assessing, linguistics, methodology.

Proverbs, as a kind of paremiological cliché, are a national property. They are used in the corresponding of linguistic-speech situation. Proverbs are characterized by imagery, colorfulness, completeness of thought etc. The images, preserved by the internal form of proverbs, make it possible to expand and deepen the understanding of culturally significant meanings, which are clearly associated in the minds of native speakers with individual lexemes or even with the whole synonymous rows of words.

Proverbs are worldly wisdom, spiritual wealth and cultural heritage of the people, experienced over centuries. The proverb, as a paremiological cliché [2,20-25; 3, 140], is a kind of paremia. Under the term “paremia” most researchers understand “aphorisms of folk origin, primarily proverbs and sayings, which, along with aphorisms of non-folklore

origin, form a relatively independent layer of linguistic expressions that are conventionally combined with phraseology, since paremias and aphorisms, unlike phraseological units, do not fulfill nominative function” [9, 201–208]. The paremias of most languages have a similar logical, moral, ethical and educational content, differing only in the images that are inherent in certain peoples.

For example:

- ✓ *Life is a stage, so learn to play your part;*
- ✓ *Eat at pleasure, drink with measure;*
- ✓ *Early to bed and early to rise makes people healthy and wealthy and wise;*
- ✓ *A wise man will hit at the edge of his wit;*
- ✓ *Nature is stronger than rearing;*
- ✓ *One man's fault is another man's lesson [5].*

Proverbs are studied not only by linguists, but also historians, ethnographers, lawyers, methodologists etc.: “The content side interests specialists of various profiles. *Historians* find in proverbs the customs of folk antiquity and echoes of the events of antiquity; *lawyers* see proverbs as a reflection of customary law; the *ethnographer*, thanks to proverbs, gets an idea of the nature of already disappeared customs and orders; *philologists*, through proverbs, try to understand the features and structure of folk thinking; *linguists* see in proverbs the most valuable material for studying the nature and laws of human speech” [7, 7]. And, from methodological point of view, proverbs are a means that is used to show linguistic, historical, geographical and cultural features of a certain language. Therefore, while teaching English as a foreign language, *methodologists* should consider the similarities and differences of the target language (English) and learners’ native language.

There are proverbs of the English and Russian languages [4, 280], that have almost the same semantics and the teacher can use the equivalents of the proverbs of the target language or translate them word by word to the learners’ native language. In both cases the participants will not face to some problems in cognizing the meaning of the given proverb:

- ✓ *Brevity is the soul of wit (Краткость – душа ума) – Краткость – сестра таланта;*
- ✓ *The pen is mightier than the sword (Перо сильнее меча) – Не бей кулаком, ударь словом;*
- ✓ *Don't judge a book by its cover (Не суди о книге по ее обложке) – Не красна книга письмом, красна – умом;*
- ✓ *Like author, like book (Какой писатель, такая и книга) – Каков горшок, такова и крышка;*
- ✓ *Knowledge makes one laugh, but wealth makes one dance (Богатство пляшет, а ум смеется) – Знание лучше богатства [5].*

However, some teachers will face to some problems while teaching proverbs of non-native (or a foreign) language, as there are some notions in any language which can be interpreted depending on some factors. They are cultural, historical, geographical, national features that are inherent to one specific language or nation. As for the English people, their national character is determined as vital: “National character is tenacious among all peoples. But this does not apply to any people more than to the British, who, apparently, have something like a patent for the vitality of their nature...” [10; 6] and while teaching English proverbs in a foreign audience our main task will be to reveal national and culture-specific features in the proverbs of the taught language. They can be illustrated by some words, word-realias or notions in proverbs, that are better conceived, understood or interpreted by the native speakers of that language:

- *A miss is as good as a **mile**;*

Explanation: In this proverb, the realia is the word and notion “mile”, which is absent in the Russian language and can literally be translated as kilometer, meter but will not convey the direct meaning of this word (mile). In this proverb, the word (mile) isn't used in direct meaning, but in its indirect or figurative meaning (i.e., in this case, it means a miss). And this proverb can be interpreted as follows: even a small failure, a loss is not considered a victory, but still a defeat.

The learners perceive proverbial text as a linguistic sign. The semantic content of the proverb is two-dimensional: 1) direct meaning, i.e. literal meaning of the proverb; 2) figurative meaning, in other words metaphorical meaning of the proverb. While teaching proverbs of non-native language it is necessary to correlate their logical and figurative meanings so as to make the teaching and assessing process as easy as possible. In order to assess learners' knowledge of cultural background of target language (in our case, knowledge of proverbs), teachers can apply for such tasks, ways or techniques [8]:

- ✓ Students should determine figurative or metaphorical meaning in English and Russian proverbs;
- ✓ Students should translate English proverbs into their native language (Russian);
- ✓ Students should conduct syntactical analysis of English and Russian proverbs to identify the similarities and differences;
- ✓ The teacher gives some key words and students should guess or find some proverbs (in their native or other languages) according to their semantic content.

While completing such tasks students can face to some problems as for example, they may find it difficult to identify figurative meaning in proverbs of non-native language; they may translate the presented proverbs word by word etc. Nevertheless, using such tasks will make it easy for teachers of foreign languages to evaluate not only students' oral skills or transferable skills, but also to assess their knowledge of cultural background. Thus, to assess the students' knowledge of proverbs of the English language, teachers can apply for such methods and techniques as control questions, testing, tasks for speaking and writing, translation etc.

To assess the students' knowledge of English proverbial world we can apply for some types of assessment. Actually, there are six main types of assessment: diagnostic, formative, summative, ipsative, norm-referenced, criterion-referenced. While teaching English proverbs in a foreign language audience, we can apply for formative type of assessment as it helps to control how the students' knowledge is growing in real time. Teachers, utilizing this type of assessment, can use such techniques or tools to evaluate and control their knowledge: portfolios, short/regular quizzes, classroom discussions, tests

etc. While teaching and assessing proverbs of the English language, we can apply for such tools as presented to evaluate not only the students' knowledge of the language, but also their knowledge of culture of the target language, as: "Current research... (formative type of assessment) ...indicates that acquired knowledge is not simply a collection of concepts and procedural skills filed in long-term memory. Rather, the knowledge is structured by individuals in meaningful ways, which grow and change over time" [1,70]

Thus, paremias are interesting not only as linguistic units, but also as a means of understanding the national character of people, penetrating into the system of their values, as a repository of various cultural information. Paremias contain the totality of opinions developed by the people as a linguocultural community, make it possible to discover the most significant values that have developed in ethnic consciousness, reflecting the philosophy and psychology of the people.

Proverbs reflect the worldview and life of the people in all their diversity. They convey philosophical, social, aesthetic, religious, moral and ethical views of the people. The main purpose of proverbs is to give a *popular assessment* of the impartial phenomena of reality, thereby expressing a worldview. Their themes are truly immense. They cover absolutely all aspects of human life, the most diverse interconnections between various phenomena of reality. Proverbs are studied not only from linguistic point of view, but also from the perspective of methodology. Methodology of teaching English proverbs demands searching for some ways or techniques for assessing. Some of them are control questions, testing, tasks for speaking and writing, translation etc. One of the appropriate ways of assessing the students' knowledge of proverbs is formative type. Thus, the study of proverbs is of serious importance both for the theory of language, comparative linguistics, and for linguodidactics and methodology of teaching a foreign language.

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