

NITIAL STAGES OF STUDYING PROVERBS IN LINGUISTICS

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Abstract. *This article is devoted to the early stages of studying proverbs in the history of linguistics, their scientific classification, and the formation of research methodology. The study of proverbs is viewed as a complex linguocultural process that emerged at the intersection of several disciplines such as folklore studies, ethnolinguistics, semasiology, and paremiology. Proverbs are analyzed as linguistic expressions of folk wisdom, focusing on their semantic, morphological, and pragmatic structures, as well as the genesis of proverbs found in ancient written monuments. The article provides a comparative analysis of early research in Eastern and Western linguistic traditions and examines the views of scholars such as Mahmud al-Kashgari, Aristotle, Erasmus of Rotterdam, V. Dal, and G. Permyakov as historical sources for the study of proverbs. Theoretical foundations for the study of proverbs as stable linguistic units are discussed, along with approaches that uncover their lexical and semantic nature and issues related to the emergence of paremiology as an independent scientific discipline.*

Key words: *proverb, linguistics, paremiology, oral folk creativity, linguoculturology, semantics, pragmatics, historical stage, ethnolinguistics*

Introduction

In the development of linguistics, the study of oral folk art, particularly proverbs, has always held special significance. Proverbs represent the people's worldview, cultural values, life experience, and moral norms, expressed through concise but deeply meaningful linguistic forms. They are linguistic phenomena of not only artistic and

aesthetic but also cognitive and linguocultural importance. Although the scientific study of proverbs began within the framework of folklore and ethnography, over time they became recognized as an independent object of linguistic research. This article examines the early stages of the study of proverbs, theoretical approaches that shaped their understanding, and major scientific concepts that have developed within linguistics.

1. Historical Roots of Proverb Studies - The study of proverbs in linguistics has a very long history. Proverbs are among the oldest manifestations of human thought. Their earliest examples can be found in ancient written sources such as Avesta, Devonu Lug'otit Turk, Qutadghu Bilig, and Mahbub al-Qulub. Mahmud al-Kashgari is recognized as the first Turkic scholar who systematically collected proverbs and analyzed their semantic and grammatical structures.

In the context of world linguistics and European scholarly tradition, the study of proverbs began with Aristotle's Rhetoric, where he analyzed aphorisms and wise sayings. Later, Erasmus of Rotterdam's Adagia (1500) laid the foundation for European paremiology. This work included thousands of proverbs, interpreted in relation to their meaning, context of use, and cultural connotations.

2. Formation of Linguistic Approaches to Proverb Study - At the initial stages, the study of proverbs within linguistics was a matter of debate. By the late 19th and early 20th centuries, linguistic methods of proverb analysis began to develop more actively. Linguists started viewing proverbs as part of the system of fixed expressions—phraseological units.

During this period, Russian scholars such as A. Potebnya, V. Vinogradov, and G. Permyakov analyzed proverbs from semantic, structural, and functional perspectives. Their research formed the theoretical foundations of paremiology as a branch of linguistics.

In Uzbek linguistics, the systematic study of proverbs began in the mid-20th century. Scholars such as H. Zarifov, O. Safarov, S. Ibrohimov, and M. Karimov explored the lexical-semantic structure of Uzbek proverbs, their place in national mentality, and their educational function. H. Zarifov's collected corpus of Uzbek proverbs served as an important source for later research.

Paremiology as an Independent Discipline

In the second half of the 20th century, the study of proverbs evolved into a separate linguistic discipline known as paremiology (from Greek *paroimia* — proverb). Paremiology focuses on the study of proverbs, sayings, aphorisms, and folk maxims as integral parts of linguistic and cultural systems.

Paremiology is closely related to semantic analysis, cognitive linguistics, ethnolinguistics, and linguoculturology, and it examines proverbs as conceptual models of folk thinking. For example, Uzbek proverbs such as “He who works will rejoice” or “The one who studies knows; the one who doesn’t study loses what he knows” reflect conceptual values like diligence and the pursuit of knowledge.

In modern paremiology, proverbs are analyzed not only as linguistic units but also as cultural codes and models of national mentality. Therefore, contemporary research incorporates cognitive-semantic, pragmatic, and discourse-based approaches to proverb analysis.

Development of German Paremiology

This article also examines the developmental stages of German proverb studies. The 16th century is considered the beginning of systematic work in this field in Germany. During this period, writers, historians, and theologians began to take an interest in folk oral creativity.

Sebastian Franck (1541) compiled *Sprichwörter*, one of the oldest written collections of German proverbs. Containing over 10,000 entries, it reflected the moral values and life experiences of the German people.

Erasmus of Rotterdam’s *Adagia*, although based on Latin proverbs, significantly influenced German scholarship and inspired many German scholars to collect their own national proverbs.

At that time, proverbs were primarily regarded as tools for moral and religious education.

By the 17th and 18th centuries, the collection and classification of German proverbs became more systematic and scientifically oriented.

Georg Henischius (1601), in his *Teütsche Sprichwörter*, attempted a thematic classification of folk proverbs.

Friedrich Meissner (1630) also contributed notably to the development of German paremiology.

In the 18th century, the German Enlighteners began to analyze proverbs not only from a didactic perspective but also as linguistic and historical phenomena. This marked a transition from viewing proverbs merely as “moral maxims” to seeing them as valuable cultural heritage.

In the 19th century, German paremiology underwent a major transformation thanks to the work of the Grimm brothers. During the Romantic era, interest in folk oral creativity grew substantially.

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, in their 1837 publication *Deutsche Sprichwörter* (“German Proverbs”), created one of the first large-scale, scientifically grounded collections of proverbs.

They not only gathered proverbs but also conducted comparative analyses of their origins, semantic layers, and parallels in other languages.

Their contribution laid a solid foundation for the development of modern German paremiology.

Conclusion. The early stages of studying proverbs were primarily connected with the collection of oral folklore and its inclusion in written sources. Later stages, however, introduced more linguistic and analytical approaches aimed at uncovering the semantic and structural nature of proverbs.

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