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COMMUNICATIVE-PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF BINARY-BASED PAREMIAS IN ENGLISH, UZBEK AND RUSSIAN LANGUAGES

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Abstract: The present article investigates the communicative-pragmatic characteristics of binary-based paremias in English, Uzbek, and Russian languages. Binary opposition is considered one of the fundamental cognitive mechanisms through which people conceptualize reality and transmit cultural values. Proverbs and sayings, as significant units of paremiological discourse, frequently embody binary concepts such as good–evil, wisdom–foolishness, wealth–poverty, and truth–falsehood. The study aims to identify the communicative functions and pragmatic potential of binary-based paremias across the three languages. Comparative analysis reveals both universal and culture-specific features in the representation of binary oppositions. The findings demonstrate that binary-based paremias serve not only as linguistic expressions of collective wisdom but also as effective communicative tools for persuasion, evaluation, and social regulation.

Keywords: paremia, binary opposition, communicative pragmatics, paremiology, intercultural communication, English language, Uzbek language, Russian language.

Introduction

Language reflects human cognition and cultural experience. One of the most productive ways in which people categorize and understand the world is through binary oppositions. According to structuralist and cognitive linguistic approaches, concepts such as life–death, light–darkness, good–evil, and truth–lie form the basis of human perception and reasoning.

Paremias, including proverbs and sayings, are valuable linguistic units that preserve and transmit cultural knowledge accumulated through generations. Binary oppositions frequently occur in paremias because they simplify complex social experiences and provide clear moral evaluations. The communicative and pragmatic significance of such paremias lies in their ability to influence interlocutors, express attitudes, and regulate social behavior.

This study focuses on the communicative-pragmatic analysis of binary-based paremias in English, Uzbek, and Russian languages, aiming to reveal similarities and differences in their linguistic and cultural representation.

Literature Review

The theory of binary oppositions was extensively developed by structuralist scholars such as Ferdinand de Saussure and Claude Lévi-Strauss. Later, cognitive linguists emphasized the role of conceptual oppositions in human thinking and language organization.

Research on paremiology has been conducted by Wolfgang Mieder, Grigory Permyakov, and numerous scholars in Turkic and Slavic linguistics. Mieder defines proverbs as concise traditional statements expressing common truths and practical wisdom. Permyakov highlighted the structural and semantic organization of proverbial systems based on oppositional principles.

Although numerous studies have examined proverb semantics and cultural functions, comparatively little attention has been paid to the communicative-pragmatic potential of binary-based paremias in a multilingual context. Therefore, the present research seeks to fill this gap.

Methodology

The study employs comparative, descriptive, and communicative-pragmatic methods of analysis. A corpus of English, Uzbek, and Russian proverbs containing binary oppositions was collected from paremiological dictionaries and linguistic databases.

The analysis focuses on:

Identification of binary conceptual structures;

Determination of communicative functions;

Examination of pragmatic meanings in discourse;

Comparison of linguistic and cultural features across languages.

Analysis and Discussion

Good vs. Evil

The opposition between good and evil is among the most universal binary concepts.

English:

Good conquers evil.

Uzbek:

Yaxshilik qil, dengizga ot, baliq bilmasa, Xoliq biladi.

Russian:

Добро побеждает зло.

These paremias emphasize moral superiority and encourage positive behavior.

Pragmatically, they perform persuasive and didactic functions.

Wisdom vs. Foolishness

Wisdom is commonly valued, whereas foolishness is criticized.

English:

A wise man learns by the mistakes of others; a fool by his own.

Uzbek:

Dono bir aytar, nodon ming qaytar.

Russian:

Умный учится на чужих ошибках, глупый — на своих.

The communicative purpose of these proverbs is educational. They encourage critical thinking and social learning.

Wealth vs. Poverty

Economic conditions frequently serve as a basis for binary conceptualization.

English:

The rich get richer, and the poor get poorer.

Uzbek:

Boy boyga boqadi, suv soyga oqadi.

Russian:

Богатый богатеет, бедный беднеет.

These paremias often express social evaluation and criticism. Their pragmatic function involves commenting on social inequality and economic realities.

Truth vs. Falsehood

Truthfulness is culturally appreciated across all three linguistic communities.

English:

Truth will out.

Uzbek:

Haqiqat egilsa ham sinmaydi.

Russian:

Правда всегда выйдет наружу.

These examples demonstrate a shared cultural belief in the ultimate triumph of truth. They are frequently used to encourage honesty and strengthen moral arguments.

Communicative-Pragmatic Functions of Binary-Based Paremias

The analysis reveals several major communicative-pragmatic functions:

1. Didactic Function

Binary-based paremias teach moral values and social norms through contrastive representation.

2. Persuasive Function

Speakers employ proverbs to strengthen arguments and influence listeners' attitudes.

3. Evaluative Function

Paremias express positive or negative judgments concerning human behavior and social phenomena.

4. Regulatory Function

Proverbs contribute to social regulation by encouraging acceptable conduct and discouraging undesirable actions.

5. Cultural-Identity Function

Binary oppositions in paremias reflect national worldviews and cultural priorities while simultaneously demonstrating universal human values.

Comparative Findings

The comparison of English, Uzbek, and Russian binary-based paremias demonstrates both universal and language-specific characteristics.

Universal features include:

Similar moral evaluations;

Shared conceptual oppositions;

Comparable communicative functions;

Common educational purposes.

Culture-specific features include:

National imagery and symbolism;

Historical and social references;

Distinct metaphorical expressions;

Unique pragmatic nuances.

The Uzbek paremias often contain references to traditional values and communal relationships, while Russian paremias tend to emphasize philosophical reflection. English paremias frequently exhibit concise and pragmatic formulations.

Conclusion

Binary-based paremias represent an important intersection of language, cognition, and culture. The communicative-pragmatic analysis of English, Uzbek, and Russian proverbs demonstrates that binary oppositions function as powerful linguistic mechanisms for conveying cultural knowledge, influencing interlocutors, and regulating social behavior. Despite cultural differences, the examined languages share common conceptual foundations, indicating universal cognitive patterns in human understanding of reality. At the same time, each language reflects its unique cultural identity through specific proverbial expressions and pragmatic strategies. The study contributes to comparative paremiology, intercultural communication, and pragmatic linguistics by highlighting the role of binary oppositions in the communicative effectiveness of paremias.

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