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The Essential Function of the Proverb

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Abstract: *The article describes the history and principles of development of proverbs in the folklore genre. It is based on the information about the origin, evolution, characteristics and structure of the proverb genre.*

Key words: *artistic image, folklore genre, proverbs, character, tradition, historical, ethnography, science, structure.*

Proverbs are preconstructed, they are ready-made expressions, they are part of the language code and they belong to the lexical stock. We can group the proverbs into a repertoire in dictionary format. This proves that the proverb belongs to the language because one can list the language units in the collections but it is impossible to make an inventory of the discursive units. Another Argument concerns the non-updating of lexical elements, namely the absence of current reference and the absence of structural modifications. For example, in the proverb *The beard does not make the man, the beard* and *the man* do not refer to a concrete person. The proverb *Good heart cannot lie* does not accept the modification *My heart cannot lie* . The proverb *What the eyes do not see does not hurt the heart* cannot be modified by *What the eyes did not see does not hurt the heart* . One can invoke an argument linked to the acquisition of proverbs. Proverbs formally have the aspect of a sentence but they must be learned as a whole and by heart. Half a proverb is no longer a proverb. This cognitive element has its origin in the perception that the proverb is a constituent unit of the lexicon. We are not among the proponents of the hypothesis that the proverb belongs to the language. For us, the proverb belongs well and truly to the discourse. Here are our arguments to legitimize the status of the unit of discourse of the proverb.

The first argument concerns the manner of actualization of the proverb. The proverb belongs to discourse because it was born there: it bears the marks of enunciation. In the proverb, there is a system of actualizers of the noun and the verb which are the determiners definite, indefinite, possessive and

the morphemes of person, time and aspect. In the proverb *the beard does not make the man, the beard* does not refer to a concrete beard but to the beard with all the properties sufficient and necessarily to identify it. *Man* does not refer to a particular person but to the man representative of all men without thinking of individual differences. The verb *faire* conjugated in the present indicative denotes an indeterminate temporal reference. Thus, one cannot say that the words *the beard, the man* are not actualized but they actualize in their own way. Proverbs have their own mode of actualization.

The second argument is rhetorical and pragmatic. The metaphors and stylistic effects found abundantly in the proverb are created by and in the discourse. In the proverb *House without flame, body without soul,* there are two images: *house without flame* and *body without soul* . The symmetry of words: *house-body, without-without, flame-soul* ; the repetition of the preposition *sans , the flame-soul* assonance makes it possible to expressively establish the relation of comparison between two members of the proverb. A house without a flame lacks vitality, just as a body without a soul lacks liveliness. Without flame and without soul, the house and the body remain envelopes that lack the depth that makes them alive. And the message that the proverb wants to convey to its user is to take care of the house and the body.

The third argument is in favor of a discursive status. The proverb is an autonomous and closed statement. On this point, Anscombre writes: *"A proverb is closed insofar as it can all by itself be the object of a self-sufficient enunciation, ie not requiring prior and posterior enunciations to form a complete discourse. And a proverb is autonomous insofar as it is not assigned a fixed place in the discourses in which it appears"* (2000). The proverbial utterance involves an enunciator who in his own voice makes heard the voice of another who is posited as responsible for the utterance. The other is the Wisdom of Nations. It constitutes the ability to speak, to speak well, disseminated by a dominant figure of thought, a culture of discourse.

What has just been said suffices to characterize the proverb as a unit of discourse but not of language. And the proverb constitutes a genre of discourse in the ocean of genres of discourse.

It is undoubtedly true that the proverb has always enjoyed a special place in discourse. Indeed, even before knowing how to read and write, man needed to transmit his ideas and his knowledge to his descendants. However, there was only the oral code that could serve him to safeguard and deliver from one generation to the next, his thought, his accumulated knowledge and, in a sense, his culture. In fact, this oral code had to have a structure allowing the memorization of information over time. Reason for which, it required a concision as for the idea and the use of the rhyme on the level of the form which makes it possible to memorize more easily. This is why the proverb is recognized by most linguists or philosophers as a bearer of morality, wisdom and experience emanating from the ancients. However, even though it does not have a specific form, it shares its characters with other sentence forms like maxims, adages, sayings, etc.

The different functions of the proverb:

The essential function of the proverb is pedagogical, it proposes an apprenticeship which is: "The product of the systematic application of a small number of practically coherent principles and it delivers the reason for all the sensible series which will be appropriated in the form of a generative principle of practices organized according to the same reason. These acquired principles will make it possible to make a transfer of schemes that the habitus applies on the basis of equivalences, which facilitates the substitutability of one reaction to another, one thus learns to master by a sort of practical generalization the problems of the same form that may arise in new situations. Learning takes place in two ways:

1. by simple familiarization: the apprentice imperceptibly and unconsciously acquires the principles of the "art of living" (as in the proverbs).

2. by structural exercises: tending to transmit this or that form of practical mastery.

With their pedagogical function, proverbs enlighten and clarify the discourse. They aim to sharpen the wisdom of the mind through the symbolism of figures and an economy of knowledge that spares the master "of speech" and obliges the "profane" to seek and above all to find the implicit meanings on their own.

The social function: They are the place of socialization necessary for self-reproduction and the renewal of social ideals. It is a system of reference characterized by a linguistic phenomenology: at the bottom of each word we are witnessing the analysis of society. They reveal a certain ethic, deviations and vices are denounced. Proverbs establish the group's value system.

The moralizing function: Proverbs function as an ethical grammar to guide men. It is a moralizing instrument of social regulation. In other words, their morale works cultural impact.

They educate on the languages of the group's values: the circle of honour, courtesy, respect for oneself and for others… to accompany and help the members of the community to orient their conduct. The proverb as a "good word" could be used to put an end to a conflict and to decide in the name of wisdom, the enunciation of the proverb can lead the accused to question himself or to review his ideas. All the real or imaginary evocations of ancestral uses, the comparisons have the purpose of cultivating peace, the search for conciliation between the antagonists. The rhetorical function: The proverb decorates, enhances the subject and by extension, the author of the subject.

The pragmatic function: It allows convincing and acting on the audience.

The didactic function: It makes it possible to teach the tradition.

The cathartic function: An opportunity to tell the truth. There is purification and liberation of the soul by allowing release. - Promotes metacognitive education: Metacognition is an old term based on: "What we know, knowing that we know, what we don't know, knowing that we don't know: c is to truly know. »

It designates the activity of the learner who is exercised from the moment when he is no longer in action but in a verbalized reflection or not. It improves the acquisition of knowledge and the transfer of knowledge. It is the knowledge one has of one's own cognitive processes. We can conceive of metacognition as the part of self-knowledge relating to the ability to learn and to the personal mastery of the knowledge acquired. It is a collective and recursive dimension of knowledge. In the 1990s, metacognitive capacity emerged of great interest in the effectiveness of learning with the motto "learning to learn". Cognitive education emphasizes the integration of knowledge more than its memorization, a consolidation of autonomy: gradual transition from heteroregulatory mechanisms (eg a teacher) to self-regulatory mechanisms (depending on the child, the one who learns).

The liveliness of the use of proverbs:

If it is a question, here, of confronting proverbs relating to the representation of the man of the distinct society, for example, the French community of the scriptural type, one is tempted to wonder if there are differences on the plan the vitality and relevance of proverbs between the different communities: "If the Chinese proverb is willingly philosophical, the Japanese surprisingly poetic, the African evocative of myths, we will refuse to see in it the mark of an inferiority of the Europe or medieval

France, but indeed that of a different distribution between common speech and individual speech, between transmitted, ancestral speech and speech of novelty. »

Proverbs, like other collective productions of discourse (tales, myths, nursery rhymes, etc.), only exist through their living uses. "A collection of proverbs always has, in Western Europe, a certain nostalgic allure, it is not the same in societies with a strong rural component (…) even less so in Islamic countries. The vitality of Arabic and Persian proverbs is notorious. »

The question that arises from this state of affairs is if the creativity of proverbs is inherent in the rural nature of certain societies, what would be the vitality of their use within the society?

To date, few studies, even less in linguistics, have been conducted on the use of proverbs. As a result, no concrete findings on the reality of their recovery. Currently, in France, the slogan takes precedence over the use of proverbs. A reality due to socio-economic development which would justify our particular interest in the use of proverbs to measure the extent of their use within one's society. The relationship between content from bygone social conditions, and the use that must accommodate current conditions of discourse makes the success or failure of the proverb in a given society. But this report "is complicated by the unexpected possibilities of rhetoric. The proverb is often, thanks to the metaphor, ambiguous and endowed with several meanings. It can be transferred, distorted, taken up in irony, distanced…".

Rhetoric ensures the proverb's survival through time and generations, given the diversity of interpretation it offers. "To judge the content of proverbs as one judges the value of a philosophical thought or a moralist's maxim, one loses sight of its nature. By playing on its form, on the contrary, we reveal its powers".

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