

Periphrases of Proverbs and Other Popular Expressions in Linguacultural Aspect

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Abstract: This article analyzes the periphrasis used in proverbs and sayings. Periphrases of proverbs and popular expressions have no less cultural connotation than the units that served as the basis for paraphrasing. Cultural information encoded in such periphrases, is of great importance for lingua-culture, since, among other things, reflects the attitude of a modern Western speaker culture to traditional cultural values and stereotypes. Moreover, periphrases with cultural connotations reflect changes occurring in the mentality of a nation in relation about its cultural values.

Keywords: periphrasis, proverbs, stereotypes, cultural connotations, mentality, cultural values, nation.

Proverbs and popular expressions are part of the vocabulary of the language. They not only give imagery and brightness to speech but also reflect the process of development of the culture of the nation, consolidate in the consciousness people's cultural attitudes and stereotypes, and participate in the formation of the cultural background of the language. Most linguists include words in composition of phraseology. Yes, A.B. Kunin classifies proverbs as commutative phraseological units and notes that "...in phraseology they are studied as units of the phraseological composition of the language, possessing unique semantic, stylistic and structural features"¹. In this work, the messages will be considered as phraseological elements, since we consider the point of view of A.B. Kunin logical and theoretically sound.

The role of phraseological units as guardians of cultural information is emphasized by many researchers. In particular, V.A. Maslova writes about this: "The phraseological component of language not only reproduces elements and features of the cultural-national worldview but also forms them. And every phraseological unit, if it contains cultural connotations, contributes to the overall mosaic picture of national culture"².

We share the point of view of V.A. Maslova, but we also believe that periphrases of proverbs have no less cultural connotation, and in some cases, their pragmatic and linguacultural potential even exceeds the connotative load of the original unit. Periphrases, proverbs, sayings, and popular expressions help authors grow a whole range of emotions, based on the categories of national culture. Moreover, it is often the periphrases of proverbs that reflect the emerging changes in the mentality of the nation and help to understand and accept them.

¹ Кунин, А.В. Курс фразеологии современного английского языка /А.В. Кунин. - 2-е изд., перераб. - М. : Высшая школа, 1996. — 381с.

² Маслова, В.А. Лингвокультурология: учеб. пособие для студ. высш. учеб. заведений / В.А. Маслова. - М.: Академия, 2001. - 208 с.

Let's consider the use of proverb periphrases on several of characteristic examples:

Once an enemy, always an enemy. (The Economist, March, 2007)

The example uses a periphrasis of the famous proverb “*Once a thief always a thief*”, which roughly corresponds to the Russian “*Горбатою только могила исправит*”. However, it should be noted that Russian and English proverbs have different linguistic and cultural information. A periphrasis of the English proverb *Once an enemy, always an enemy* cannot be translated into Russian by simply paraphrasing corresponding to the Russian proverb. Using a similar periphrasis helps authors express a whole range of emotions in one phrase, touching on deep subconscious associations of the carriers of a given culture. The periphrasis *Once an enemy, always an enemy* is used to describe the relationship of a famous British politician to his opponents. Periphrasis succinctly says that this politician has an irreconcilable attitude towards opponents, does not forgive the insult caused, and is adamant in his judgments. It is quite obvious that the authors, using a periphrasis of the well-known proverbs, were able to concisely, and briefly describe the situation, appealing not only to the knowledge of the audience but also touching on several categories of national culture.

In some cases, authors express their attitude to this or that situation, to a specific person, organization, or even country, using a periphrasis of a famous proverb or popular expression. Using a similar reception, you can achieve the necessary attitude towards the described situation, relying on the cultural fund of the nation and its cultural values. For example:

Europe should accept that a bad deal with the Kremlin is worse than no deal at all. (The Times, May, 2007)

In the example, a well-known expression that has been used by journalists does not catch the eye. However, its significance and linguacultural potential cannot be underestimated. The expression that served as the basis for the periphrasis is quite well Swedish and outside the English-speaking world: “*Bad peace is better than no peace at all.*” Using the above expression as a basis, the authors emphasized correctly, but at the same time clearly expressed their opinion. In addition, it is the periphrasis that makes this judgment so acute, and negative emotions so strong. Having already become the traditional attitude towards Russia as an opponent country is consolidated the stylistic device. If a proverb states that a bad world is still better, then with the help of periphrasis the authors achieve the opposite: bad relations with Russia are even worse than no relations any relationship. Thus, introducing a new element into what is already known expression, the authors touch upon the ideals according to which the individual, the situation is qualified as “positive/negative”, “decent/unworthy” and at the same time transfer these attitudes to the described object.

Let's look at another example:

True beauty is not only in the eye, but in the mind of the beholder, it lies in knowing what's behind the painted face, the well-polished surface, the baubles and diamonds. (The New York Times, May, 2007)

Here we are dealing with a periphrasis of the famous proverb “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder”, which roughly translates into Russian as “*Красота в глазах смотрящего*” The above-detailed periphrasis is very vivid and reveals the trends observed today in Western society from the point of view of revaluation or further strengthening of certain cultural values. In this case, we can observe how the paraphrase of the proverb further deepens the attitudes of national culture, which developed over the centuries and became part of the culture of the people. This periphrasis clearly emphasizes in the system of cultural values of a modern person, emphasizing that appearance, and attributes of prestigious and glamorous life are artificial, and unimportant for human communication, and the only important element is the spiritual core, which some do not see behind the polished fence. In other words, the periphrasis of the famous proverb does not question the cultural values of the nation, but develops those

cultural attitudes that are contained in the original proverb, and emphasizes their relevance for modern society, to preserve the continuity of generations.

The proverb *Beauty is in the eye of the beholder* is paraphrased by journalists quite often, each time emphasizing some new peculiarity in the perception of the surrounding reality of the average speaker of Western culture. Let's look at one more thing, for example with this proverb:

Fatness is in the eye of the beholder to whom society's power structure, always eager to form new forms of discrimination, has given false consciousness. (Newsweek, December, 2006)

The author, using periphrasis, draws a parallel between incompatible, at first glance, concepts, namely: fatness and beauty. But this periphrasis is far from accidental; it very clearly reflects the changes that are typical for Western society at the present stage of development. An unusual paraphrase, in which priorities are shifted, is a protest against imposed beauty standards, against delicate, skinny bodies which drove out all possible diversity of forms from life and led to discrimination.

Thus, periphrases of proverbs, starting from the deep cultural content of the original unit, give a new meaning to known truth. At the same time, periphrases of proverbs have a pragmatic potential, which only increases thanks to the cultural component of a proverb or popular expression.

In several cases, the author's periphrasis is not the words, but an expression that functions in the language of proverbs. It seems necessary to consider here the periphrases of the winged expressions that are often used in modern English newspaper and magazine discourse, but their authorship is unknown. Let's turn to

an example:

Never underestimate a computer. ("The Economist", April 2007)

The example periphrases the well-known truth "Never underestimate your damn." The corresponding Russian equivalent is "Нельзя недооценивать своего врага". This expression is quite popular in society and is used most often as advice in various situations. Periphrases of these sayings are also used in modern newspaper and magazine discourse. It is especially interesting from the point of view of linguistic and cultural connotations. Using Swiss as a base saying, the author draws a parallel between the concepts of "enemy" and "computer". This is quite unusual for a society in which the computer is considered the main invention of the second half of the XX century. But just like this the periphrasis helps the author to warn society against the dominance of computers and indicate their dominant position in people's lives. In general, a paraphrase of a popular saying casts doubts on the positive role of computers and makes you think about the possible consequences depending on a given human invention. The idea expressed is not new to Western culture. The negative role of machines is often discussed in Western philosophy, sociology, and psychology. More English Luddites in the XIX century destroyed the machines. The theme of the "revolt of machines" against man, the "uprising computers" is often found in American science fiction.

The number of such paraphrases is quite high: 31% of the total number of linguacultural periphrases are periphrases of proverbs and expressions equivalent to them. Cultural information codified in such paraphrases has great importance for lingua-culture, as it reflects the attitude of modern carriers of Western culture to traditional national values and stereotypes. In addition, periphrases, interesting from the point of view of cultural connotations, allow us to analyze changes, occurring in the mentality of the nation and about its cultural values.

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