

**ICEST 2021****II International Conference on Economic and Social Trends for Sustainability of Modern Society****LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT  
"WISDOM" IN THE WORLD PROVERBS**

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**Abstract**

The study of paremias is one of the leading directions of the linguists scientific research, because this layer of the language belongs to oral folk art, keeps the original wisdom of ethnos, is closely connected with culture and language. The main cultural values are reflected in the language, and therefore in proverbs, in the form of concepts. This study is devoted to the analysis of the concept "wisdom" in the paremias of representatives of different languages and cultures: Russia, Egypt, Jordan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Karakalpakstan, India, Ghana, nationalities, inhabiting Africa. Paremias are one of the most information-rich sources of knowledge about the culture of the people, because include all major cultural values. The analysis gives ground to say that the core of the lingo-cultural concept "wisdom" is made up of the concepts "mind", "knowledge", "word", "speech", "silence", "teacher", "deed" or "action". At the same time, peripheral inclusions, as well as understanding the meaning of each component, may differ in different languages, and therefore in different cultures.

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*Keywords:* Proverb, paremia, cultural linguistics, concept

## **1. Introduction**

The accelerating process of anthropologization of humanitarian knowledge is a natural result and, at the same time, a quite expected reaction to cultural and linguistic globalization, which is the “extinction” of languages and cultures under the pressure of the English language and Anglo-Saxon culture. In this case, the preservation of the native language and the uniqueness of the culture of each nation becomes the primary task of every person on the planet. Scientific knowledge also did not stay away from the need to comprehend the diversity of cultural forms: Nowadays the theme of national character or mentality is rather urgent in the linguistic science. “This may be connected with various factors, especially globalization and the arrangement of effective intercultural communication. In the present days it becomes doubtless that at least elementary knowledge of the culture is necessary for productive communication with the representative of ...the country” (Ibrahimova et al., 2017, p. 627). In this sense linguocultural conceptology is also a kind of cultural and linguistic ecology tool, contributing to the preservation of national languages and cultures through the preservation of cultural meanings "archived" in the linguocultural concept (Vorkachev et al., 2016).

## **2. Problem Statement**

In addition to unique cultural values, there is a certain list of universal human moral guidelines, which are a kind of axiological core of humanity. All values are fixed in the language in the form of basic concepts, among which the concept of "wisdom" plays a significant role. Revealing the “core” of this concept, which is characteristic of most cultures, and peripheral areas that reflect the originality of a particular language or people, is of undoubted scientific interest. The most informative in this case is the idiomatic level of the language, because "proverbs are autonomous traditional units of didactic content and poetic form ... which can independently make a full-fledged utterance" (Gotthardt & Varga, 2015, p. 8).

## **3. Research Questions**

Modern science is developing from the angle of anthropocentrism: one way or another, all scientific problems "revolve" around a person. One of the significant results of linguistic research is the realization that language is recognized as "the life-giving source of the entire value-semantic space of culture" (Alefirenko, 2016, p. 14). In this case, language, especially oral folk art "provides inexhaustible material for the analysis of both the value component of each culture separately, and the need to search for common value " places "of modernity.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

Analyse the group of idioms included in the concept of "wisdom" belonging to different peoples of the world.

## 5. Research Methods

The main research method that allows to compare linguocultural units that exist simultaneously in different languages (synchronic method) is a typological analysis of idioms, which makes it possible to identify the proximity of the conceptual sphere of different ethnic groups. particular methods of cultural linguistics used in this study are the description of the concept by the associative field, the analysis of the meaning by the dictionary definitions and the study of the concept through the lexical and grammatical field of the lexeme.

Note that paremia performs significant speech functions: the proverb not only conveys information in a compressed form (compression function), but focuses on certain meanings. At the same time, "the correct and appropriate use of proverbs and sayings gives speech a unique originality and special expressiveness, makes speech accurate, well-marked, emotionally colored and expressively rich" (Tcou & Rusinova, 2014, p. 192). In this case, the comparative study of the paremias and idioms of various, sometimes absolutely distant, cultures is an actual direction of modern linguistics, philosophy, cultural studies and many other sciences, because "linguoculturological analysis allows to describe the semantics of both idioms and paremias in the coordinates of a certain culture in relation to its archetypes, mythologems, symbols, standards, stereotypes; in reference with culture codes; to reveal the prescriptions of culture" (Kovshova, 2019, p. 33). The definition of such prescriptions, which are universal for different cultures, are repeated in their basic meaning, contributes to the formation of tolerance and the process of mutually beneficial neighborhood of different cultures representatives.

The reasons for cultural differences are varied: the climate, way of government, faith give each people a special physiognomy, "which is more or less reflected in the mirror of poetry. There is a way of thinking and feeling, there is a darkness of customs, beliefs and habits that belong exclusively to some people " (as cited in Nikulin, 2004). The Russian poet, who sincerely loves his native language, admired it and the great diversity of languages and cultures of the world, caught and conveyed the reasons for intercultural differences. Modern researchers have a similar point of view: «The cultural image of each nation in the world is unique and is determined by such factors as living conditions, history, social structure, traditions, lifestyle» (Orazakynkyzy et al., 2020, p. 4091). "The cultural view of the world is proved by all its views by linguistic means, so that we can talk about the linguistic image of the world and compare and contrast the concepts formed at the level of thinking and based on cultural studies» (Orazakynkyzy et al., 2020, p. 4091). At the same time, we believe that the uniqueness of an ethnos is recorded not only in poetry and prose, i.e. literature in general, it is most vividly reflected in the lively, colloquial speech, because "the value-semantic space of the language ... is based on special cultural categories called values" (Alefirenko, 2016, p. 9). A picture of the world that is unique for each nation, firmly fixed in the language, is created by the so-called "cultural codes", the main purpose of which is to be an instrument of self-determination of the bearer of culture, a prism through which he learns the world, because "in linguistic signs, cultural information is stored and transmitted in speech - explaining the past and predicting the future" (Kovshova, 2019, p. 14). The most figurative and complete code of folk culture, ethnic signs and laws are reflected in proverbs and sayings, idioms and phraseological units, because «they are exactly the forms of existence the

language that conserves long centuries of national and all-human wisdom. It is necessary to explore proverbs in both linguistic and cultural paradigms (Rakhimova et al., 2019, p. 1049).

## **6. Findings**

Language is a mirror of the nation, carries key attitudes. Researchers identify several types of values, which are based on groups of similar values: vital (life, health, quality of life, natural environment, etc.), social (social status, status, diligence, wealth, profession, family, tolerance, gender equality, etc.), political (freedom of speech, civil freedom, legality, civil peace, etc.), moral (good, love, friendship, duty, honour, decency, etc.), religious (God, divine law, faith, salvation, etc.), aesthetic (beauty, ideal, style, harmony) (Alefirenko, 2016).

We believe that one of the basic social values is wisdom. Of course, each ethnic group has a unique set of stable allegories that convey the knowledge and experience of its people accumulated over the centuries. However, there are also a number of “universal” paremias. Before turning to the analysis of proverbs and sayings of different peoples of the world, let's define the content of this concept. So, the "Russian language dictionary" defines wisdom as "deep knowledge, understanding of something" and a property from the adjective "wise", which means "1. Gifted with a great mind and possessing knowledge of life, experience. <...> 2. Based on deep understanding, knowledge of something, experience" (Russian language dictionary, 1999). The fundamental difference between knowledge and wisdom is enshrined in the proverbs of different cultures. So, for example, in Uzbekistan they believe that "To study is one thing, to learn is another", the inhabitants of Egypt also agree with them: "Science is in the head, not in the book." Obviously, the key in defining wisdom is not so much knowledge as experience, life or practical experience, based on that very knowledge. For example, there are paremias that relate knowledge and experience: "Teaching is a view of life" (India), "People who do not make mistakes are those who never learn" (Egypt). Note that the last proverb indicates a certain connection between mistakes and experience, and therefore wisdom. Thus, the lexeme "mistake" is included in the concept of wisdom.

Close to the lexemes “mind”, “knowledge”, “teaching” is also the concept of “teacher”, as a person who is able to share knowledge and wisdom. Respect for a mentor has always been considered law. The value and significance of a teacher is enshrined in proverbs: for example, “If one does not know, the other will teach” (Akans is an ethnic group living in Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire), “A teacher is better than two books” (Tamil proverb), “Teacher’s thoughts are the second sun for students” (Egypt).

So, concept-forming for wisdom are the nouns “knowledge”, “understanding”, “mind”, “experience”. Includes this concept and the concept of "teacher". However, different peoples of the world have a fairly large number of paremias, in which wisdom is closely related to the concepts of "word", "speech" as instruments for transmitting wisdom, its important features. The Russians say: "To know the bird by its feathers, but the man follow by the words." “What is the mind, so this is in the speech,” they say in Karakalpakstan. Of course, in these proverbs there are no indications of a direct connection between words and wisdom, however, one can judge the mind, experience and wisdom of the speaker, it is speech that becomes the very criterion on the basis of which an opinion about a person is formed, his social status is determined.

In this case, speech, as a sign of wisdom, receives a number of specific characteristics: its duration, content and addressee acquire a certain meaning. The Russian people more often speak out about the fact that verbosity and inept speech are a sign of stupidity: "To say idle, what to write on the water", "Not every pillar is a outskirts, not every word is a proverb", "A wise head is a short tongue" (duration and content) or "It is not strange what has been spoken about, but what has been hidden." The pricelessness of a word, the ability of a wise person to "waste" words correctly is reflected in the Uzbek proverb "Don't waste a word on a fool - don't drive a nail into a stone". It is noteworthy that the "word" in this pair is metaphorically connected with the nail (the sharpness of the word, its destructive or creative power is recognized by the culture of almost every nation), while the awareness of the practical uselessness of talking with a fool is enhanced by visualization: driving a nail into a stone does not lead to anything, except for deformation, damage to the weapon itself. In this case, a conversation with a fool kind of devalues the words themselves, deprives them not only of wisdom, but also of their original form, meaning, and eventually destroys them.

If a word has a certain weight, then its absence, silence must have potential. At the same time, we believe that silence has a much broader meaning than speech or word. For example, "The answer to the fool is silence" (Uzbekistan), confirms the correctness of the previous proverb and carries the meaning of an imperative, in this case silence means the unwillingness of any communication, respect for the word and its power. However, in Karakalpakstan there is a proverb "A sign is enough for a clever, for a fool even a hit is not enough". In this pair, we are again talking about silence, but now mutual understanding in the absence of words means the wisdom of the participants in the dialogue, but the need to replace words with physical influence just has the opposite meaning. Note that along with silence in the proverbs of the peoples of the world, the concept of "listening" often appears: for example, "Speech is a field of knowledge, but listening is the privilege of a wise man" (Egypt). The Russian people also agree with this: "Speech is beautiful by listening", "It is also pleasant to listen to a good speech." Russians also say: "A wise word will warm you even in cold weather." Thus, wisdom in the Russian language includes "comprehension" or "reflection" (connection with the mind, thought process, not only knowledge), and wisdom is also associated with vital warmth.

However, with the undoubted inclusion of the lexemes "word" and "speech" in the semantic core of the concept "wisdom", as we could see earlier, not every statement and is not always a sign of intelligence or wisdom. So, for example, in Russian culture it is generally accepted that "You cannot listen to all the speeches" or "We hear speeches, but we do not see the heart." If in the first proverb we are again faced with a situation where words are not always a sign of the mind, then in the second paremia a new semantic connection appears: mind - heart. It is noteworthy that the Russian language contains paremias, frankly saying that the words should not be believed: "Good speaker, but unclean on hand", "Speeches are like snow, and deeds are like soot", "Speeches are royal, but beggarly deeds." Russian culture emphasizes the fact that liars can often speak beautifully; for a Russian person, the emphasis is not on words, but on deeds. This is partly due to the fact that in the Russian mentality there is a certain distrust of words, sounding information, the possibility of inconsistency between words and true, hidden thoughts is assumed. Usually such a situation arises with the so-called "smooth" speech: beautiful, correct and too positive in its content, but not proved by the same deeds.

So, wisdom is manifested not only in words, but also in actions. Representatives of different cultures agree with this. For example, in Jordan they say: "Think before you say, and do not sit down until you know your place." It is noteworthy that the Arabic proverb paints a rather lengthy picture, gives a more accurate description of a wise person. In the presented Middle Eastern couple, wisdom is inseparable from good breeding, knowledge of behavioral etiquette, which determines the social significance of wisdom. At the same time, upbringing is indicated by the phrase "learn your place", where it is not about location in the literal sense, but about the observance of social-hierarchical relations. However, this does not stop the inclusion of the concept "place", in its figurative sense, in the semantic field of the concept "wisdom". The primacy of thinking, analysis before expression as a manifestation of wisdom is also emphasized by Russian culture: "A wise man does nothing without thinking." We emphasize that wisdom here is not limited only to the content of speech, it applies to all life situations, i.e. is a constant feature of a person and is characterized by the degree of deliberation of his actions. Thus, the analyzed concept is supplemented by "thinking" and then "deed", "action", which partly coincides with the original definition of "wisdom" in terms of knowledge and experience.

The Africans say about the importance of the word and its "possibilities": "Sometimes proverbs are your sword, sometimes your shield" (Stesin, 2013, p. 44). There are many similar sayings in the Russian language: for example, "Every Yegorka has his own saying," "You can't get away from a proverb even on a horse," "A saying is a flower, a proverb is a berry," "A proverb is not a nurse, but good with her," etc. Knowledge of proverbs and the ability to use them, as a rule, indicates erudition of a person, his special connection with his own culture. The use of a proverb for an African is a sign of erudition, intelligence, because they say: "They speak with a sage with proverbs." (Stesin, 2013, p. 44). The respect of African peoples for the proverb was reflected in the saying "Words are food for the soul, and the proverb is palm oil with which this food is eaten." (Stesin, 2013, p. 44). In the Punjabi language, about a wise and learned person will be said "Oily wisdom." Note that the symbolism of oil and its connection with wisdom requires additional research and is not considered in this work. The Russian people agree: "The speech is beautiful with a parable", "Naked speech is not proverb", "For a proverb, for a fool and for the truth - and there is no trial" or "You cannot buy a proverb on the market".

The Arab East says: "Before the great mind I bow my head, before the great heart I kneel." Note that this proverb has no Russian equivalent, but we consider it possible to attribute it to linguocultural coincidences: the culture of the Russian people is based on the separation, sometimes even opposition of the concepts of "heart" and "mind", an attempt to determine the place of each of them in the structure of the personality. At the same time, the significant numerical superiority of Russian paremias about kindness and generosity in comparison with proverbs about intelligence emphasizes the priority of the first quality over the second. We observe a similar situation in the Eastern wisdom: "The respect that an intelligent person deserves cannot be compared with the honour that a person with a kind heart receives".

The proverb of Tajikistan "expands" the meaning of the previous statement: "It is easy to become a scientist, but difficult to become a person". Note that the antonymic pair "easy-difficult" creates a relationship of opposition of the concepts "scientist-human". No matter how occasional this antonymic pair may seem, the analysis shows its consistency and legitimacy: a "person" in this opposition is not a madman, but a being guided in his life by his "heart", that is, living according to moral laws, which are based on the

principle of kindness, acceptance. This attitude towards the world around us is typical for most modern cultures, which means that it also has to do with wisdom, because universal human values, as well as the axiological values of each culture, are the result of age-old observations and reflections, the so-called wisdom in the Absolute. Thus, the emphasis of the Tajik proverb is made not so much on the kindness specified in the word "person", but on knowledge. However, in this case, the semantic field "scientist" is quantitatively, and not qualitatively, as in the case of the Arab couple, less than a "person", since means only a person with information, not knowledge. "The fanatical mind is like the pupil of the eye," say the Egyptians. Popular wisdom says that knowledge can lead to lack of freedom, because it often leads to limitation. Comparison with the organ of vision is a metaphor: the diameter of the pupil increases by 3 times, the total size is 10 times. The change, of course, is significant, but not endless. Mind presupposes constant development, not limited by either time or space. The metaphor in the proposed proverb conveys the similarity of two denotations on the basis of common semes (features and functions of denotations), creates an image, most often emotional. "The symbol, on the contrary, does not contain an assessment, it only indicates the replacement of one naming by another, not only on a figurative, but also on a rational basis" (Teliya, 1996). At the same time, science knows the fact that the pupil increases if it sees what it wants; the same is observed when meeting a fanatical mind: a person limited by his addictions is inclined to see and perceive only what fits into his concept of perceiving the world, which further testifies to his limitations.

So, excessive concentration on a specific subject of knowledge leads to a certain limited intellect, which means that it is not a guarantee of wisdom, because knowledge is a system of well-organized information and messages. What is outside of a such system is not knowledge (Artanovskiy, 2021). At the same time, there is an opinion in Ghana that "half of knowledge is dangerous." In the Russian language, there are also proverbs that reveal the meaning of knowledge, the volume of which does not correspond to the optimal requirements: for example, "If you are too clever, you spoil it." A certain danger of knowledge is emphasized by many cultures: an insufficient amount of it often leads to a mistake, and an excess of information can complicate the search for truth. At the same time, "wisdom has always included an ethical aspect, suggesting a person's connection with the Whole, the integrity of his own spiritual experience." (Sadovnichiy, 2006).

## 7. Conclusion

The popularity of paremias is explained, we believe, by the fact that:

the cliché nature of proverbs and sayings, that is the property of being perceived globally as a ready-made constructive and semantic whole, reproduced without significant changes in the corresponding communicative situations, is the basis for the fact that proverbs and sayings are always interesting ... (Moiseeva & Chudina, 2004, p. 171)

At the same time, paremias are becoming one of the most information-rich sources of knowledge about the culture of the people, because include all major cultural values. One of which is human wisdom. Thus, the analysis of the concept of "wisdom" in proverbs and sayings showed that in almost every language

this concept includes such lexemes as "mind", "knowledge", "word", "speech", "silence", "teacher", deed" or "action". Indirectly, the concept of "wisdom" includes the concepts of "silence", "honesty", "proverb". However, not all peoples equally regard the significance of these lexemes, and their attitude to the original concept of "wisdom" is not the same. Thus, we believe that the study of the paremias of the peoples of the world using the methods of cultural linguistics makes it possible through language to understand the mentality of representatives of other cultures, find common ground, accept differences, and therefore make the world more conscious and closer.

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