

SCTCMG 2019

International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the Context of Modern Globalism»

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE GERMAN AND RUSSIAN ANTI-PROVERBS IN THE FIELD "GELD/MONEY"

Sergey Samozhenov (a)*, Irina Matveyeva (b)

*Corresponding author

(a) Nizhny Novgorod State Linguistic University named after N A Dobrolyubov,
31A, Minina Str., Nizhny Novgorod, Russia, samozh@lunn.ru, (831)416 60 17

(b) Nizhny Novgorod State Linguistic University named after N A Dobrolyubov,
31A Minina Str., Nizhny Novgorod, Russia, Iramatweewa@yandex.ru, (831)416 60 73

Abstract

At the turn of the twentieth – twenty first centuries, many linguists noted intensified use of proverbs, sayings and other stable groups of words in the media and everyday speech to make statements convincing, significant, complete. Despite an extensive proverbial fund, word creation in the field of paremiology continues, but it exhibits some peculiarities. Traditional proverbs, sayings and aphorisms are intended to teach, caution succeeding generations based on the experience of previous ones. Modern paremias are characterized by distortion, ridicule of the very wisdom. The comparative analysis of the selected transformed versions of paremic units revealed the most and least frequent methods of the language game, and a national-cultural component characteristic of the German and Russian anti-proverbs related to "Money". The study showed that for both languages the patterns of changing the paremia form coincide in many ways. The patterns of modifying the content are different up to the opposite: neogenesis is not typical of the Germans transforms. This difference explains the greater number and lesser completeness of the thematic groups of Russian anti-proverbs. A slight deviation from the structure and semantics of the initial paremia and, as a result, a limited range of topics of the transformed versions is more characteristic of the German anti-proverb field. Almost all German paremias can be compactly classified into two groups peculiar only to them and four groups common with Russians, many of which, in turn, have separate topics that do not overlap with others within the anti-proverb money field.

© 2019 Published by Future Academy www.FutureAcademy.org.UK

Keywords: Paremia, proverb, anti-proverb, language game, national.



1. Introduction

It is known that proverbs are layers of life and reflect popular wisdom in the form of a laconic maxim. Proverbs have appeared from time immemorial and passed on the experience of generations from mouth to mouth. They do not lose popularity in the modern world, although they were mostly coined many centuries ago. The values reflected in many proverbs (such as family, friendship, work, etc.) are apparently eternal, and popular wisdom teaches us a proper attitude towards these attitudes (Gutknecht, 2001). However, the world does not stand in one place long, it changes, and a person's attitude to life also changes, which, as before, is reflected in the language. This is confirmed by the new-generation paremias – anti-proverbs – judgments based on traditional proverbs with changed meaning (Schabestiel, 2010; Ivanova, 2015; Kamphausen, 2016).

Anti-proverbs are a relatively new phenomenon in the language and arouse great interest of researchers (Mieder, 1998; Walter & Mokienko, 2005; Gnedash, 2005; Gossler, 2005; Schmidt, 2012). At first, similar to traditional paremias, they existed orally or were found in literature, including as author aphorisms. However, in the past couple of decades, due to weakening of censorship and the advent of the Internet, the proverbial transforms changed from oral to written form, which has facilitated their fixation and research. Transforms can be found on various online forums, in headlines in the media. Transforms are used on television, in articles, discussions to pursue the same purpose as the proverbs – to convince readers, viewers or interlocutors of the correctness of any judgment using minimal language expenditures. In this case, anti-proverbs are even more effective, because they are typically more specific than their prototypes; moreover, the author himself can change the original expression in the right area, thus creating its new version most relevant to a particular topic (Viro, 2008; Novgorodtsev, 2014).

2. Problem Statement

The study is relevant due to widespread use of anti-proverbs in modern speech and insufficient knowledge of this phenomenon in domestic and foreign paremiology. Traditional folklore adapts to conditions of the new era and undergoes changes: it goes into the urban environment, the meaning of sayings and their form change. Variability is an objective and inevitable consequence of the language development. Mieder (1998) argues that anti-proverbs can rightly be considered modern manifestations of popular wisdom. They flourished in the 50s of the twentieth century, and although many of the new paremias have not yet rooted in everyday speech, they acquired great significance and formed "an extremely important ground for the new proverbial foundation." According to the established tradition, modern researchers involved in linguoconceptology often study the actualization of some concept in various works of national folklore, especially in paremias, convenient for research due to their inherent formal brevity and semantic capacity (Zayakin & Samozhenov, 2010; Matveeva, 2016). The analysis of new proverbs shows that transformed paremias, despite humorous or satirical wordplay, bear the stamp of modern popular wisdom. The study of anti-proverbs in a particular language and culture helps to track changes in the concept of a particular language and culture over time (Gorbova, 2014; Romanova, 2014).

3. Research Questions

The anti-proverb worldview is composed of separate anti-proverb fields that differ in different languages by subject, size, and configuration. Distinctions in configuration in the comparative analysis come into the picture. Thus, a comparative study of antiproverbial pictures of the world is based on a consistent comparative description of various components of their anti-proverb fields. Since the content of modern paremias is distributed according to the thematic groups relevant to their creators, the comparison is demonstrative largely due to the choice of the field of socially significant topics. The subject of this study is the fund of anti-proverbs related to "Money" in the German and Russian languages.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is a comparative study of antiproverbial pictures of the world as material for study at the stage of conceptual analysis. The results of the analysis are illustrated by the semantic field "Money" in German and Russian modern proverbs about money. To attain the purpose, the following specific tasks are to be fulfilled:

1. Analysis of theoretical sources, study and description of general and private foundations of the research in domestic and foreign linguistics on the anti-proverb phenomenon;
2. Systematization and structuring of the components of "Geld/Money" fields in German and Russian languages;
3. Description of the anti-proverb "Geld /Money" fields in German and Russian languages.

5. Research Methods

The purpose and objectives of the study determined application of the following general scientific and linguistic methods:

- method of continuous sampling,
- method of controlled selection,
- method of linguistic analysis,
- method of elementary quantitative calculations.

The sources of anti-proverbs were primarily the *Verdrehte Weisheiten* dictionaries by Mieder (1998) and *Anti-proverbs of the Russian people* by Walter and Mokienko (2005), and other sources. In the process of continuous sampling, the following criteria were taken into account:

- presence of the lexeme "Geld/money", "reich/rich", "arm/poor"
- reference to names of banknotes,
- reference to cash transactions.

The volume of the continuous sample included 90 Russian and German anti-proverbs related to "Money". The comparison was made in terms of form and content (Gossler's (2005) classification), and semantics of transformed paremias.

A comparative study of the linguistic mentality on the material of anti-proverbs suggests, first of all, reconstruction of the corresponding antiproverbial pictures of the world and their comparison supported by language patterns.

6. Findings

In order to demonstrate the effectiveness of the designated approach to the use of anti-proverbs in the conceptual analysis, in the framework of this study, we present some results of the study of fragments of the semantic component of the "Geld/Money" field updated in modern proverbs.

With regard to semantics based on the selected material, several main groups can be distinguished. The following topics are present in the "Geld/Money" field in the antiproverbial pictures of the world of both languages:

- happiness
- enrichment source
- poverty
- power

However, the central place in the German language belongs to thrift (22.2%), peculiar only to its transforms, largely with positive (61.1%) (*Wer den Pfennig nicht ehrt, be-kommt auch keine Gehaltserhöhung*), but also negative attitude to it (*Wer den Pfennig nicht ehrt – kennt seinen eigenen Wert*).

Then follow the semantic pairs (20% each) "Money is happiness" (*Geld macht nicht glücklich, abner man wird besser mit dem Unglück fertig, wenn man nicht arm ist*) and "Money is the source of their receipt" (*Geld stinkt nicht, sagt der Fabrikherr. Warum, fragen die Arbeiter, trägt er dann die Nase so hoch, während wir schwitzend sein Geld verdienen?*). The fact that money can make a person happy is claimed by all the selected anti-proverbs related to this topic. Also in the paremias of this group, irony is implied. But it is preferable to earn them more or less honestly, as indicated by a large number of paremias condemning "dirty" money (70.5%) (*"Geld stinkt nicht!": Eine der übelsten kapitalistischen Floskeln, die sich durch durchstinkt*), although the remaining ones admit that all means are good for enrichment (*Geld stinkt nicht. Man muss den richtigen Riecher dafür haben*).

The third place (11% each) is occupied by anti-proverb groups about power (*Geld regiert die Welt – und hat dieses Geschäft immer noch besser besorgt als Ideale*) and poverty (*Armut ist keine Schande, wiederholen die Reichen und fügen: but it is confoundedly inconvenient*). The power of money is recognized by 100% of anti-proverbs on the topic. This is supported by a predominantly negative, even contemptuous estimate of poverty (77.8%) (*Armut ist zwar keine Schande, doch sie züchtet manche Bande*), and only in a couple of proverbs it is not a vice (*Mag sein, dass Armut keine Schande ist. Reichtum ist eine*).

The same percentage of anti-proverbs refers to diligence that is necessary (45.5%) (*Überstund hat Geld im Mund*) or, conversely, meaningless for enrichment (*Morgenstund hat Gold im Mund. Das sagt der Bauer, der nie einen Barren zu sehen kriegt*).

In Russian, the ratio is slightly different. The first group (16.7%) refers to happiness (If your happiness is not money, then send it to me). Similar to the German paremias, money is associated with happiness in 100% of cases.

The next group of anti-proverbs (14.4%) characterizes money as follows: mostly (54.8%) positive (Money is a kind of sixth sense, without which the other five are deficient), less often (38.5%) ambiguous (Money is a squabble, but it is bad without them!) and only in one case (Money is dung) negatively.

The third place (10%) is taken by the source of money (Money does not smell, because they are laundered). Russian transforms are much more loyal than the German ones, and the "purity" of earnings does not matter in 55.5% of cases (You won't earn all the money, some will have to be stolen), but almost half of them rather negatively evaluate dishonest ways of enrichment (Shovel money and use the shovel to bury into the ground...).

The fourth group (6.7%) includes anti-proverbs, in which money is opposed to time (Time heals, but faster for money).

Two groups (5.6% and 4.4%) consider owning (It is indecent to count other's money, and it is not interesting to count yours) and spending money (Tell me how you spend money, and I will tell you what you are). Although there were few examples on these topics, their absence among the German anti-proverbs shows the difference in financial consciousness of the two peoples. Thus, the Russian spending can be opposed to the thrift of the German, which occupies one of the first positions among the topics of traditional paremias. This makes it possible to speak of a stable feature of the national character. The German, albeit less pronounced, diligence is opposed to the Russian desire to count money in someone's wallet instead of hard working.

The topic of power is represented in small groups (3.3% each) (Who pays, not only orders music, but also makes others listen) and poverty ("Poverty is not a vice" – the luxury used to say). Similar to the German language, power and money are inextricably linked in 100% of cases.

Anti-proverbs, as well as their prototypes, have covered a long way from author's neologisms through distribution and consolidation in speech to recognition as a full-fledged linguistic phenomenon that requires a comprehensive study. It should be noted that its foundations were laid by the German scientist Mieder (1998). His scientific achievements in the field of paremiology served as a starting point for researchers all over the world (Gossler, 2005; Hristova-Gotthardt, 2006; Antonova, 2010; Kairanskaya, 2011; Burenkova, 2012; Bredis, 2014; Ivanova, 2015; Timiryasheva, 2018), both in Germanic studies and, for example, in Slavic or Anglistics.

During theoretical material processing, various points of view were studied regarding the definition, description, formation, and functioning of transformed paremias in modern language and speech.

Thus, there are several classifications of the mechanisms of formation of anti-proverbs according to the following principles:

- degree of modification (Gnedash, 2005),
- prevalence (Walter & Mokienko, 2005),
- transformation of form or content (Gossler, 2005).

Despite the fact that the proverbial transforms can be very different from their prototypes, they also have a number of similarities necessary for their existence. These include the following characteristics of paremias:

- conciseness of expressions,
- lexical repetition,
- rhythm,
- rhyme
- parallelism in the content, expression and rhythm.

In addition, anti-proverbs perform the same speech functions as their original versions, except for didactic, if the proverb is modified.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the proverbial fund, as the value system, is continuously changing: outdated expressions are used less frequently; they are replaced by new ones. Therefore, it is important to conduct regular studies that reflect the current state of the proverbial picture of the world. These studies will give an opportunity to learn more about modern man and society, national and world culture.

7. Conclusion

The analysis of typical language game techniques characteristic of anti-proverbs allows some conclusions:

Firstly, anti-proverbs are concise, often figurative judgments, which are based on one or more proverbs, sayings or other fixed expressions. There are various descriptions and classifications of transformed paremias, but the most detailed ones are currently presented by the German researcher Gossler (2005), who offers 9 versions of the changed form and 8 versions of the changed content of paremias with a description of their formation mechanisms.

Secondly, not all versions of transformation of the form and content of the chosen classification are found among the paremias of the "Geld/Money" field. The reasons for the absence of examples of one or another formation mechanism include the English-German basis of Gossler's (2005) classification and syntactic and lexical features of the proverbs of the field under study.

The most (addition) and least (rearrangement of components) characteristic ways of changing the form of the Russian and German proverbs partially coincide, but in the German language unproductive transformations also include a combination and additions with a change in the positions of components.

The most productive way to change the content for German anti-proverbs is softened meaning, and the rarest one is its indisputable denial. In the Russian language, neogenesis is most common, and deviation is less common.

In addition, several topics (happiness, source of income, poverty and power) are present in both languages with different frequencies. Topics typical of the German (thrift, diligence) paremias only or the Russian (waste of money, someone else's wallet) proverbs only clearly demonstrate the difference of mentalities, namely the Russian financial unconsciousness opposed to the German constant desire to save.

During transformation, the instructive trend of traditional paremia usually gives way to humor. At the same time, the main reason for emergence of transforms is gradual changes in the value orientation of society.

Thus, it is obvious that anti-proverbs should not be considered as the language degradation, regardless of their content, since the content only reflects the actual universal human or individual values. Paremia creation indicates the language development. Due to preservation of the functions of the original expressions after transformation, anti-proverbs are not inferior to them in prevalence, especially in the media and colloquial speech. In the future, to explain the reasons for the formation of a particular linguistic mentality, it is necessary to consider data from history, psychology, history of culture, and socio- and psycholinguistics.

References

- Antonova, O. N. (2010). Anti-proverbs as a means of functional modification of a media discourse. *Bulletin of Samara State University*, 3(77), 96–101.
- Bredis, M. A. (2014). Reflection of value orientations in paremiology. *Bulletin of Novgorod State University*, 77, 102–104.
- Burenkova, S. V. (2012). Violations of everyday norms and language game. *Omsk Scientific Herald*, 2, 137–141.
- Gnedash, S. I. (2005). Proverbial units and the possibility of their transformation in modern German. *Bulletin of Chuvash University*, 2, 155–159.
- Gorbova, N. V. (2014). On the issue of changing the value of the proverbial picture of the world in the Russian language. *Bulletin of Novgorod State University*, 77, 65–67.
- Gossler, E. (2005). *Besser arm dran, als Bein ab: Antisprichwörter und ihresgleichen*. Wien, Präsenz.
- Gutknecht, Ch. (2001). *Lauter spitze Zungen: geflügelte Worte und ihre Geschichte*. München: C.H. Beck Verlag.
- Hristova-Gotthardt, H. (2006). Neue Besen kehren gut, aber die alten kennen die Ecken: Zum Stellenwert von Sprichwörtern und Antisprichwörtern im DaF-Unterricht. In *Focus on German Studies*, 13. *Electronic Materials* (pp. 115–128). University of Cincinnati Press.
- Ivanova, E. V. (2015). World picture in the English anti-proverbs. In *XLIII International Philological Conference. Selected Works* (pp. 161–169). St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg State University.
- Kamphausen, G. (2016). *Anti-Sprichwort*. Retrieved from: <http://haltenraum.com/article/anti-sprichwort>
- Kairanskaya, E.A. (2011). A comprehensive study of paremias in Russian and foreign linguistics. *Bulletin of Oryol State University*, 257–259.
- Matveeva, I. V. (2016). Comparative analysis of German and Russian proverbs of the field of "money". *Russian Germanistics: Annual of the Russian Union of Germanists*, 13, 222–229.
- Mieder, W. (1998). *Verdrehte Weisheiten*. Wiesbaden: Quelle & Meyer.
- Novgorodtsev, S. (2014). *Be careful, people!: Anti-proverbs in Russian journalism*. Retrieved from: http://www.bbc.com/russian/blogs/2014/11/141105_blog_seva_novgorodtsev
- Romanova, E. V. (2014). German humor: linguistic and cultural aspects. *Philology. Issues of theory and practice*, 7(1), 168–172.
- Schabestiel, Th. (2010). *Wer früher lacht, ist länger lustig*. Retrieved from: <http://www.jim-zone.de/panorama/2010/12/01/wer-fruher-lacht-ist-langer-lustig>
- Schmidt, W. (2012). *Morgenstund ist ungesund*. Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag.
- Timiryasheva, K. R. (2018). The functioning of the anti-vocabulary in modern English, German and Russian. In *Scientific Forum: Philology, Art and Cultural Studies: Coll. Art. based on the materials of the XII international scientific-practical conference* (pp. 111–115). Moscow: MTSNO.
- Viro, P. (2008). *Der geschenkte Gaul geht so lange zum Brunnen bis er selbst Gold im Munde hat (Zum Gebrauch des sprichwörtlichen Minimums in deutschen Presstexten)*. Jyväskylä: Universität Jyväskylä.
- Walter, H., & Mokienko, V. M. (2005). *Anti-proverbs of the Russian people*. St. Petersburg: Neva.
- Zayakin, O. R., & Samozhenov, S. N. (2010). Language and culture in the historical and current processes of internal migration and transformation in a multinational state of Russia. *The world of science, culture and education*, 3(22), 287–289.