Linguistic Representation of Family Relations in Russian and Yemeni Set Expressions

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Abstract

The significance of the present study is caused by an intensive development of comparative linguistics in respect of the specification and improvement of its fundamental theoretical principles, as well as concerning particular descriptions of the separate language facts. The article presents a complex comparative research of Russian and Yemeni paroemias reflecting specific character of family relations in conceptual-semantic and ethno-cultural aspects. The objective of the article is to consider peculiarities of the worldview of Russian and Yemeni people, which are presented in the set expressions reflecting national and cultural specifics of Russian and Arab linguistic cultures. The article highlights identical features and distinctions between paroemias of the both languages with “family” lexeme and “family relations” semantic field. Theoretical information and language base covered in the article can be used in teaching vocabulary of modern Russian and Arabic languages, Arabic dialectology, Linguistic culture, Cross-cultural communication; as well as in teaching special courses on language and culture issues to students specializing in “linguistics” and “philology”. Applied value of the present study is determined by the possibility of practical usage of the information given in compiling textbooks, study guides and dictionaries of Arabic and Russian languages.

Keywords: Russian paroemias, Yemeni paroemias, a family, family relations

1. Introduction

Proclaiming humanism and sensible norms of human society, proverbial folklore of the Russian and Arabic languages isn’t deprived of the contradictions risen by the contradictions of life itself. It is known that along with the literary Arabic language – official language of Arab countries, there are local (territorial) dialects with peculiar accents and parlance. According to A.G. Belova, Arab dialects appeared and started developing from ancient times “along with the poetic and sacral language as a common “everyday” language of tradespeople, camelcade guides carrying out economic relations between the Bedouins and settled population, as well as between different trade and religious centers of Arabia” (Belova, 1999). G. Sh. Sharbatov classifies dialects of the Arabic language as follows: Iraqi, Arabian, Yemeni, Syrian, Lebanese, Egyptian, Sudanese and the so-called Maghrebian – Lybian, Tunisian, Algerian, Moroccan (Sharbatov, 1961). The present study considers specific features of the set expressions of the Yemeni dialect of the Arabic language in comparison with Russian paroemias.

Paroemias (proverbs, sayings and aphorisms) – small genres of folklore - hold a special place among various works of folklore. Comparative study of paroemias in structurally different languages is significant due to their laconism and fixed form, astonishing content capacity, rhythmic system and age of forming. Paroemias about a family reflect the person’s “inner” world, relationships in the family and starting one’s own home life. The importance of a family in the life of a person is reflected in numerous Russian and Yemeni paroemias about a family. The article examines 97 Yemeni and 120 Russian paroemias reflecting the specific features of family relations. The figures show that the amount of Russian proverbs of the give semantic field prevails over the amount of Yemeni proverbs. According to E.I. Ivanova, this difference causes more detailed specification of the proverbial cognitive space regarding total amount of concepts as well as more detailed specification of identical concepts (Ivanova, 2002).
Despite the great amount of similar features of the concepts described by the proverbs of the languages which are compared, concepts which are unique for each nation were also revealed during the analysis of paroemiological corpus. Rich folklore language is reflected in the paroemias of both languages considered in the article; specific character of relations with family members, social and moral ethical standards are revealed.

Aiming to provide more detailed analysis of the above mentioned semantic group, we consider it viable to give the definition of the term “family” from Russian and Arabic defining dictionaries.

**Family** – a group of close relatives living together; parents with children; a married son or daughter living separately make another family (Dal’, 1955).

**Family** – 1. A group of close relatives living together. 2. A group of people united by common interests. 3. A group of animals, birds, consisting of a male, female and younglings and an isolated group of some animals, plants or mushrooms of the same kind (Ojegov, 2007).

**عائلة** - عائلة **ÀILA family** – those people who have a common house with parents, children and relatives. This lexeme is derived from the verb عائلة **ÀILA to feed, to keep (a family)**. The active voice participle عائلة **ÀIL** is translated as a breadwinner (for the family) (al-mujam al-wasit, 2012).

**عائلة** - عائلة **ÀILA family** – when they speak about a man’s family, they mean his wife and children who sponge on him for a living and relatives by his father’s side. (al-munjid al-adjadiyy, 2014).

Russian and Arabic linguistic cultures have both the peculiarities and similarities, due to the fact that the concept family is the fundamental concept for any culture, any people. Their comparative study can reveal not only specific features of the formation of a Russian or Yemeni family, but also extra linguistic conditions of its formation. N.M. Zhanpeisova notes that “meanings, characterizing different tendencies of social relationships, ethical standards peculiar to the cultures which are compared are reflected in the corpus of the proverbs considered” (Zhanpeisova, 2004).

2. Methodological Framework

Paroemias about a family reflect the arrangement of the “inner” world of a person, relationships in a family and starting a family, domestic happiness. Numerous Russian and Yemeni proverbs about a family prove the fact that family is important for a person. A group of proverbs about a family reveal very close semantic connections with proverbs of other groups. This explains the predominance of the given group of proverb and the priority of its consideration. The following features are revealed during the analysis:

1) Love for a family and Homeland is reflected in the proverbs of both nations. We fully agree with L.K. Bairamova, who writes that “concept Homeland has deep historical and cultural roots and is reflected in lexical and phraseological systems of different languages” (Bairamova, 2002).

- **بيتي بساتر عورتي** - Beiti beiti ja satr orati - My house is my castle (El sakaf, 2004).

- **عورتي ياساتر بيوتي** - A Bedouin’s pride is his house.

- **ةيعرش لا يحرق السلطان خيمة شام من** - Man shaf khemat al sultan la ehraq arishu - He, who has seen other people’s palaces, will not ruin his hut.

A similar notion is reflected in Russian proverbs:

- **РОДНАЯ ХИЖИНА МИЛЕЕ КАМЕННЫХ ПАЛАТ. Rodnaya khizhina mileye kamennyh palat.** - One’s own hut is better than stone palaces.

2) In Russian and Yemeni paroemias the category of family can be presented by means of associate words. Thus, in Arab proverbs the given category is represented by means of the following lexemes – stables, well, tree, hut, man of a house, camelcade, nails, blood. In Russian proverbs it is done by means of the lexemes – mother, bog, herd, a site of fire, nest, bread, ship, stove

- **مأ يظفرك إلا يندبلك ما** - mā yindiblik ila žufrik Only your nail will scratch your face in mourning. In the pre-Islamic period Arabs used to have an ancient custom: women mourning for the dead scratched their faces with nails until blood came out to soften the loss. It should be noted that this custom does not exist anymore. A nail in this
proverb is the representation of a close relative, as it is a part of the body. The meaning of the proverb is – Only close relatives will sincerely suffer grief at the death of a person.

만한 저주에 빠랫다. The meaning is – Members of the family will never stay indifferent to the problems of a relative and will always help.

ظفرك وظثرك لكي يحك ما يلبك. The meaning is – No one will scratch you better, than your own nail.

فجعنا كبير بينفعنا ربيته. He was brought up as a helper, he grew up and scared us. A tight man, a man of coarse grain is usually called “a son of affliction” in Arabic. Such person tends to break rules of morality and behavior, which results in insulting not only the initiator, but his family as well.

The necessity of having a man in the house can be traced in Russian proverbs as well:

В семье не без уроды. V sem’ye ne bez uroda – In every family there is a monster. This is how people
disapprovingly call a person, different from other members of the family in his bad habits, character, acts and behavior. The Arab equivalent of the proverb is: 

أَمْهَلٌ إِلَّا أَحَلُّ، أَبْخَلَكَ بِبَيْطَكَ، وَأَكْرَمَكَ بِبَيْطَتِكَ النَّاسِ! 

Mā abkhālak bīyātak, wa ākramak bīyūt in-nās! How greedy you are at home, and generous at other people's homes! The meaning is as follows: some people disguise the shortcomings in public and behave differently with family members.

The same admonition to respect the rules of etiquette at home can be found in Russian proverbs as well:

Не будь в людях приветлив, будь дома приветлив. Ne bud’ v lyudyah primetliv, bud’ doma privetliv. – Don’t be noticeable in public, be affable at home.

В людях – Ангел, дома – черт (бес). V lyudyah Angel, doma chyort (bес). – An angel in public, a devil (demon) at home.

В гостях Илья, а дома свинья. V gostyah Il’ya, doma svin’ya – Il’ya(name) in public, a pig at home.

6) Both Russian and Yemeni paroemias approve of some privacy in the family. The proverbs also encourage people not to talk about the things that happen at home in public:

عَتَرِ الأنَّامُ الْمَانِسُ وَفِي بَيْتٍ صِحْبَةَ anter amam el nas wi fi el beit sabi – A brave man in public, a child at home. A man can stop being serious at his home and even start joking.

Russian proverbs also encourage people not to discuss family matters in public:

Сор из избъ не выносит. Sor iz izby ne vynosiat – Don’t wash dirty linen out of home.

Выветай, но сору из хаты не выноси. Vymetai, no soru iz khaty ne vynositi. – Don’t wash dirty linen out of home.

У каждой избушки свои побрякушки. U kazhdoi izbushki svoii pobryakushki. – Every house has its own peculiarities.

The latter postulates the fact that there is something specific, not to be made public in every family, which makes the given proverbs more judgmental.

7) Yemeni paroemias, unlike Russian ones, have a characteristic metaphor, when the lexeme "family" itself is a metaphor and represents something else.

كلُّ يَطَرِقُ مَا هُوَ أَحَلُّ kull kull yati ma huwa lahu ahlun Everyone meets his family. This proverb is interpreted as follows: every man meets his actions and statements. It is used to draw a parallel between the actions and the nature of the subject. Here, the word "family" refers to the actions and statements of the person.

8) In Yemeni paroemias, unlike Russian ones, often qualitative lexeme, describing people, are used in combination with the word "family". Firstly, there can be seen a metaphorical image of the word "family". As one cannot get rid of a family kinship, people used to say "family greed" when they highlight the impossibility of eradicating certain quality of this family. Thus, the meaning of "family greed" is much more expressive than the combination of "greedy people." Along with the expression "family of greed", we identified "family of evil", "family of weakness", "family of silence", "family of ignorance", indicating the widespread range of expressions of this type.

أَهِلُ العَظْمِ يَفِيمُهُمُ مِن عُرْشٍ وَالجَالِسُ يَفِيمُهُم مِن رَفَسٍ ahl el akul ifhamu men kamza wilgahel ifhamu min rafsa – reasonable family understands at a glance, and dull - with a kick. A smart family is implied under a family of reason.

9) Yemeni paroemias held the idea that the family is not able to betray its members and the importance of family members is more substantial than the value of friends. It is noteworthy that in the analyzed Russian paroemias no similar ideas were revealed. Perhaps this underscores the fact that the family betrayals were considered priory unacceptable, and therefore were not reflected in paroemias.

ما دخل بِكَمَ يُفِّرَقُ الحَشْنُ فَلَاحَا ابْنَانَا فِيهِ ma dahal bukum huuki el hanash kalu ibina fih – they were asked what had got them into the viper’s nest. They said that their son was there. I.e. parents will never leave their baby and are
willing to sacrifice themselves.

10) In some Yemeni paroemias, in contrast to Russian ones, the idea that a man can leave his family for a long time taking a trip is reflected. In our opinion, this is due to the fact that the Arabs have long led nomadic life, went on hikes for a long time, leaving their families.

If you have returned from your trip, then fetch at least a stone for your family.

11) In some Yemeni paroemias the idea of defending your own home from the attack is brightly outlined. In the same group of Russian paroemias it is not observed. We believe that this fact indicates more rigid morals prevailing in the East, in the Arab world.

If monkeys have a fight, defend your home. I.E. do not be distracted by other people’s problems, look after your own home.

If it gets dark, close the gates and protect your home.

Cultivate your land and defend your honor. The thing is that the Arabs personal land is considered as the part of their own honor and dignity. It should be noticed that the Arabic word ard «earth” and ‘ard «honor” are almost similar phonetically and the difference is only in the first letter.

Those who have a glass house, shouldn’t throw stones (to other homes).

12) In this group of Yemeni paroemias containing a parable in its base the humor related with the family is seen. In these Russian paroemias we have not identified such an anecdotal humor.

Your mouth reminded me of two donkeys of my family.

There is a parable. Once a Yemeni family lost two donkeys. The man went to look for donkeys and met a tall woman in a burqa with beautiful eyes. The man really liked the woman, and, despite the fact that her face was covered, the man forgot about the donkeys and began to talk to her. In the course of conversation, the veil accidentally fell off the face of the woman for a moment, and displayed a man her mouth with protruding front teeth. And in this moment the man remembered the donkeys and uttered the phrase, which later became famous: "Your mouth reminded me of two donkeys of my family."

13) Considered Russian paroemias oppose discord in the family. According to E.V. Ivanova, "the idea of the existence of disorder in every family, even the most prosperous one in plain view, is very widespread and deeply rooted” (Ivanova, 2004). It should be noted that the Yemeni paroemias that describe disorders in the family, are hardly detected. Perhaps this is due to the fact that in Yemen men reserve dominant position in the family, and the man’s decision is indisputable.

Consequently, quarrels in the family principally are impossible.

It is a great sorrow, when the family is in discord.
В недружной семье добра не бывает. В недружной семье добра не бывает. - In an unharmonious family good things do not happen.

Не будет добра, коли в семье вражда. Не будет добра, коли в семье вражда. - Good things will not happen, if there is feud in the family.

It is noteworthy that among the reviewed Russian paroemias we identified paroemias, which state that the quarrel goes for the benefit of the household.

Семейная ссора — что весенний дождь. Семейная ссора — что весенний дождь. — Family quarrel is like a spring rain.

Ссора в своей семье до первого взгляда. Ссора в своей семье до первого взгляда. — The quarrel in the family is until the first glance.

14) Some Russian paroemias encourage the households to be together and not to be lonely. Among Yemeni paroemias this appeal is not revealed. In our opinion, this is due to the fact that people in Yemen for centuries lived in large families in the neighborhood with each other, and a man could not stay alone, because he always could rely on the help of the relatives.

Вся семья вместе, так и душа на месте. Вся семья вместе, так и душа на месте. — The whole family together and soul is on the spot. (Family that prays together stays together) It is said with satisfaction when all households are returning home after a hard work, various tests, etc.

На миров и смерть красна. На миров и смерть красна. — In the world, and the death is red. (Company in distress makes trouble less.) Death and disaster is not so terrible if a man is not alone. It should be noted that the expression "in the world" refers to human society. The word “world” in pre-revolutionary Russia meant rustic peasant community.

Семья в куче — не страшна и туча. Семья в куче — не страшна и туча. — If a family is in heap they are not afraid of any cloud.

Семья — печка: как холодно — все к ней собираются. Семья — печка: как холодно — все к ней собираются. — Family is an oven, when it is cold - all gather around it.

3. Results

According to quantitative indicators, Russian paroemias which contain the component of family relations considerably exceed the number of Yemeni paroemias of the similar content. In Russian and Yemeni paroemias the importance and significance of such notions as family and Motherland is stated. Moreover the idea of the supreme nature of family, primary role of man in a house, family, bringing up children are typical for both nations. In Russian paroemias a woman is characterized as a good housekeeper which is not the same for Yemeni paroemias that reflect the oriental mentality distinguished by depersonalizing of a woman.

In Yemeni paroemias it is more frequently stated that a person can cause anger and disgrace of his family for some offences, which confirms the severity of Arab customs. Both Yemeni paroemias and Russian ones affirm disapproval of cruelty towards the family and relatives. Yemeni and Russian paroemias approve of living in retirement at home among family. Some paroemias appeal not to tell about events occurring in the family. In contrast to Russian paroemias, Yemeni ones are characterized by using lexeme “Family” in periphrastic phrases. Thus the phrase “the family of greed” means a group of greedy people. We have distinguished the following phrases: “the family of greed”, “the family of evil”, "family of weakness", "family of silence", "the family of ignorance".

In some Yemeni paroemias the idea of impossibility of betraying a member of the family is represented. It is noteworthy that in the analyzed Russian paroemias this idea is not revealed. Perhaps it means that the betrayal of the family was considered a priori invalid and was not reflected in paroemias.

In certain Yemeni paroemias in contrast to Russian ones the thought of long-term leaving a family is traced. In our opinion it is explained by the nomadic lifestyle specific to the Yemenites and their long trips far from their family. Some Yemeni paroemias forcibly express the idea of preserving one’s own home from the attack. In Russian paroemias of this group this idea is not revealed, which in our point of view, underlines the cruelty of the Arab world customs.

A large number of Russian paroemias opposes discords in a family. As for the Yemeni paroemias that disapprove family discords there are hardly any of them which can be found. Perhaps it can be explained due to the fact that in Yemen dominant position in the family is assigned to a man. The opinion of man is indisputable and eliminates a possibility of any contentions. Some Russian paroemias are devoted to the description of a lonely
human existence. The purpose of these paroemias is to appeal to a change in marital status. Among Yemeni paroemias such a theme was not identified which can be explained as follows: for centuries Yemenis have been living in large families in the neighborhood with each other. Therefore one could not stay alone, because he always could rely upon the help of relatives.

4. Discussions


In addition, despite the existence of a series of monographic works (E.V. Kukhareva (2008), V.D. Ushakov (1996)), steady structures in the Arabic language were not linguistically described. Taking into account modern aspects of the study, they are considered either in the works devoted to literary criticism, sociology, social psychologist (V.E. Shagall (2001, 2008), G.S. Sharbatov (1961), etc) or fragmentarily in the linguistic works, often in lexicographical aspect (Raghib al-Asfahani (1998), Imil Jakub (2004), Ahmad Al-Maydani (2007), H.K. Baranov (1994), V.F. Polikanov (2005), etc.). This article describes fixed structures in the Yemeni dialect of Arabic which have not yet been studied in terms of their language and culture.

5. Conclusion

Comparison of paroemias in languages with different structures gives the right to conclude that there are common allegorical meanings expressed while there are doubtlessly more or less publically-national differences of the embodiment of ideas through imagery and emotional-subject concreteness. Comparative study of paroemias of structurally different languages is extremely important, because it is comparative paroemiology that is a valuable source of information about the culture, stereotypes of people's consciousness, which reflect the vision of people about morality, customs and traditions, becoming the property of linguistic consciousness.

Conducted study on the comparative analysis of Russian and Yemeni paroemias, reflecting the specificity of family relationships in the conceptual-semantic and ethno-cultural aspects allowed presenting a number of research results:

- Lingvo-cultural studies were found to enable the implementation of the cognitive approach to the comparative study of paroemias in order to identify their ethnic and cultural identity. Comparative investigation of paroemias with component-name of family relationships made it possible to establish a universal and specific features in their system and speech representation and suggest new version ethno-mental and normative-evaluative conditioning similarities and differences;

- It was revealed that many of the components that are considered national-specific only for the Russian-speaking consciousness match the Yemeni dialect of Arabic, where they also act as keywords in the equivalent paroemias;

- It was proved that the discrepancy in the semantics of some paroemias in the considered languages can be found in the syntagmatic and paradigmatic differences that occur between the content and the structure of paroemias and denoted realities;

- It was found that paroemias oriented at conceptual-semantic field of "man" in terms of family relationships, absorb a whole range of characteristics on various parameters, explicating the mosaic of national cultures on the semantic and structural levels, and being a valuable source of knowledge on originality of different linguistic pictures of world’s nations;

- The essential characteristics of paroemias and sayings, as manifested in the semantic aspect and the functional diversity of the context of their use were disclosed;

- Valuable references in the study of national paroemiological pictures of the world were compared. The cases of discrepancies of paroemias in different structured languages on associative imagery and value-evaluation levels were studied.

The spiritual life of the nation, ethnic group mentality are reflected in the component names, which are used by every individual in their cognitive activity.
6. Recommendations

The information in the article provides the usage of theoretical material and linguistic base in teaching vocabulary of modern Russian and Arabic languages, Arabic language dialects courses, as well as linguistics, intercultural communication, special courses involving issues of language and culture on the field of "Linguistics", "Philology". Applied value of the work is defined as the ability of practical material usage in compiling textbooks, study guides and dictionaries in Arabic and Russian languages.

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