

Pejorative Connotation of Proverbs and Sayings with Zoonym in the Russian, German and Tatar Languages

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Abstract

The problem of the interaction of language and culture is of interest to many scientists nowadays. Proverbs and sayings are units which contain bits of folk wisdom, values and beliefs of the nation. One of the ways to study a culture is to analyze its proverbs and sayings. The aim of the study was to compare paremiological units, namely proverbs and sayings, with zoonym components of three typologically unrelated languages: Russian, German and Tatar. The article deals with proverbs and sayings with the names of domestic animals only. In the study we used such methods as descriptive, structural, interpretative, continuous sampling method and statistical method. The analysis of the selected material revealed 847 Russian, 386 German and Tatar 1634 proverbs and sayings with the domestic animal components, 20 zonyms in total, including names of birds. The study showed that paremiological units with the names of domestic animals in some cases carry the same connotative semes, mostly pejorative, in all three languages. However, the same component of proverbs in a particular language may have the opposite meaning depending on the speech situation. Such pejorative connotative semes as [stupidity, ignorance], [idleness, laziness], [cowardice], [greed] and etc. were revealed in numerous Russian, German and Tatar proverbs and sayings. The materials of the study may be used in cultural linguistics, cognitive linguistics, cultural studies and phraseology.

Keywords: zoonym, pejorative element, paroemia, proverb, saying, connotation, connotative seme

1. Introduction

1.1 *The Source of Animal Proverbs*

The main sources of paremiological units, proverbs and sayings, are the ancient culture, the Bible, the Koran and, of course, the folk wisdom. Since ancient times animals, whose names are used in the proverbs and sayings under consideration, have been companions of people, their friends and enemies. Some animals, like domestic and wild forest dwellers, were the source of people's livelihood, others were dangerous to people.

People generally associated animals with benefit or harm, mainly in relation to themselves, to human beings. Having tamed some animals, like sheep, goat, cattle, donkey, chicken and pig which gave milk, eggs, meat, wool and skin or were used as a pack animals, people realized the importance of domestic animals in their life. For centuries people have been watching animals, learning their habits and character, and using this knowledge to give a vivid description of people's merits and disadvantages.

1.2 *The Connotative Meaning of Proverbs*

Every nation has its own worldview reflected in the language which depends on the customs and traditions, on the occupation and the lifestyle of the nation, which keeps ethno-cultural information and expresses the specific ethnic mentality (Akhmat'yanova, 2014). For centuries proverbs and sayings have been keeping rules of folk wisdom, passed from generation to generation, so they carry culturally important information. Zonyms as components of paremiological units realize a series of connotative semes, depending on various associations connected with animals. The connotation is based on social, regional, cultural and other factors, as well as emotionally conditioned factors (Ter-Minassova, 2008). E.F. Arsentieva considers connotation as "additional information" in relation to the denotative and significative components of the meaning known as a "set of semantic layers" (Arsentieva, 1989). According to E.F. Arsentieva, the connotative meaning of phraseological units (we consider proverbs and sayings as one of the types of phraseological units) consists of the following

components:

- *evaluative* component, the positive or negative connotation connected with extralinguistic factors;
- *emotional* component, "feelings and emotions expressed in phraseological meaning" from condemnation to compassion;
- *expressive* component, the "intensity of expression" of the first two components;
- *functional-stylistic* component which defines the sphere of the use of phraseological units, from bookish to colloquial style, and their stylistic reference (Arsentieva, 1989).

Evaluative component of the connotative meaning carries the cultural element, because "the evaluation of certain human qualities can be regarded as characteristics of ethical norms, rules of social life and social behavior, the attitude of the nation to the world, other nations and cultures through its own language and culture" (Ter-Minassova, 2008).

The qualities attributed to animals in proverbs and sayings figuratively and metaphorically describe people's appearance, their character, behavior, actions and deeds, as well as a certain situation or a phenomenon based on the experience gained by the nation, by the native speakers. These qualities are realized in the form of meliorative and pejorative connotative semes (Savinkina, 1987). Moreover, the same components in different proverbs and sayings of each particular language can have both positive and negative connotations, depending on the speech situation.

2. Materials and Methods

We analyzed 847 Russian, 386 German and Tatar 1634 paremiological units with the names of domestic animals which were selected by continuous sampling method from the dictionaries of proverbs and sayings. The structural analysis of proverbs and sayings in the Russian, German and Tatar languages revealed 20 language units, the names of domestic animals, including the names of birds. Method of statistical analysis allowed us to give quantitative characteristics of the zoonym components of paremias in the analyzed languages and to determine the frequency of their use.

The quantitative characteristics of paremiological units with domestic animal components in the Russian, German and Tatar languages is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Quantitative characteristics of proverbs and sayings with domestic animal components in the Russian, German and Tatar languages

№	Russian	Number of proverbs and sayings	Frequency of use, %	German	Number of proverbs and sayings	Frequency of use, %	Tatar	Number of proverbs and sayings	Frequency of use, %
1	лошадь/конь	172	10,99	Pferd	78	10,83	ат	546	19,38
2	жеребёнок	3	0,19	Fohlen	1	0,13	тай/колын	42	1,49
3	корова	55	3,51	Kuh	40	5,55	сыер	93	3,30
4	телёнок	25	1,59	Kalb	10	1,38	бозау	17	0,60
5	бык, вол	33	2,10	Ochse/Stier	30	4,16	үгез	44	1,56
6	осёл	10	0,63	Esel	48	6,66	ишэк	71	2,52
7	мул	-	-	Maultier	-	-	качыр	2	0,07
8	верблюд	1	0,06	Kamel	1	0,13	доя/гоя	37	1,31
9	свинья /поросёнок	105	6,71	Schwein/ Sau/Ferkel	22	3,05	дунгыз	61	2,16
10	овца	65	4,15	Schaf	24	3,33	сарык	77	2,73
11	коза/козёл	64	4,09	Ziege/Bock	12	1,66	кәжә/тәкә	66	2,34
12	собака/пёс	172	10,99	Hund	64	8,88	эт	484	17,18
13	кошка/кот	74	4,73	Katze/Kater	33	4,58	мәче	72	2,55
14	курица	45	2,87	Huhn/Henne	21	2,91	тавык	75	2,66
15	петух	27	1,72	Hahn	9	1,25	этәч	36	1,27
16	цыплёнок	1	0,06	Kücken	4	0,55	чебеш	11	0,39
17	гусь	19	1,21	Gans	16	2,22	каз	45	1,59
18	утка	5	0,31	Ente	1	0,13	үрдәк	38	1,34
19	индюк	1	0,06	Truthahn	-	-	күркә	8	0,28
20	кролик	-	-	Karnickel	1	0,13	йорт куяны	-	-

The semantic analysis of selected proverbs and sayings in three languages showed that they contain 30 meliorative and 69 pejorative semes (see Table 2). According to Table 2, pejorative semes prevail in all three languages. There are 57 pejorative semes in the Russian language, 48 in German and 62 in Tatar.

Table 2. Quantitative characteristics of meliorative and pejorative connotative semes in the Russian, German and Tatar languages

Connotative semes	Russian	German	Tatar
Meliorative (30)	25	24	30
Pejorative (69)	57	48	62

3. Results

The results of the analysis show the prevalence of the pejorative connotative semes expressed by the names of domestic animals in paremiological units of the Russian, German and Tatar languages. The pejorative semes and zoonym components of proverbs and sayings in the three analyzed languages are shown in Table 3. The table presents 7 pejorative semes: [stupidity, ignorance], [obstinacy], [idleness, laziness], [cowardice], [greed], [selfishness], [aggressiveness]. The rest 62 pejorative connotative semes include: [danger], [conflict],

[discourtesy], [impudence, insolence], [gluttony], [pride], [hostility], [vulnerability], [harm], [awkwardness], [submission], [suspicion] and etc.

Table 3. Pejorative connotative semes in proverbs and sayings with zoonym in the Russian, German and Tatar languages

№	Pejorative connotative semes	Names of domestic animals				
		Russian	German	Tatar		
1.	[stupidity, ignorance]	donkey	donkey	donkey		
		-	bull	bull		
		calf/bull-calf	-	-		
		cow	cow	-		
		pig	-	pig		
		-	goose	-		
		hen	-	-		
		ram	-	-		
		-	-	ewe		
		-	-	goat		
2.	[obstinacy]	dog	-	-		
		-	-	donkey		
3.	[idleness, laziness]	dog	dog	dog		
		cat/tomcat	-	cat		
		horse	-	horse		
		-	bull	bull		
		-	pig	-		
		-	-	cow		
		-	-	hen		
		-	-	duck		
		4.	[cowardice]	dog	dog	dog
				rooster	rooster	rooster
ewe	-			ewe		
-	lamb			-		
-	-			mule		
pig	-			-		
-	-			-		
5.	[greed]	dog	dog	dog		
		hen	hen	hen		
		pig	-	-		
		-	-	donkey		
		mare	-	-		
		he-goat	-	-		
		-	-	camel		
6.	[selfishness]	pig	pig	-		
		cat	-	cat		
		-	-	dog		

7.	[agressiveness]	horse	horse	horse
		-	foal	foal
		-	-	mare
		cow	cow	cow
		bull	bull	bull
		dog	dog	dog
		pig	-	pig
		rooster	-	rooster
		he-goat	-	-
		ram	-	-
		-	-	turkey

According to Table 3, the seme [stupidity, ignorance] is present in proverbs and sayings of all three languages, Russian, German and Tatar. First of all, these qualities are associated with *donkey*. A large number of paremiological units with the component *donkey* (осёл, Esel, ишәк) express stupidity and ignorance.

Russian: *Осла* хоть в Париж, а он всё будет рыж [Send a donkey to Paris, he'll return no wiser than he went];

И *осел* свой ум показывает [Donkey also shows its mind];

German: Nicht alle *Esel* haben vier Beine [Not all donkeys have four legs];

Es haben nicht alle *Esel* lange Ohren [Not all donkeys have long ears];

Tatar: *Ишәккә* хатын булма, булсаң чыда [Don't become a wife to a donkey; if you do, tolerate];

Исәп, исәп белмәгән – *ишәк* [If you cannot count, you are a donkey].

In these examples a *donkey* is a stupid, ignorant person. The component *donkey* (осёл, Esel, ишәк) has stable associations in the analyzed languages which are enhanced by the context of paremiological units.

In the Tatar language the word *donkey* (ишәк) also symbolizes an obstinate person. The seme [obstinacy] is realized in the following proverb: *Ишәк* алга тарта, койрыгы артка тарта [The *donkey* goes forward, but his tail pulls him back].

This Tatar proverb with the component *donkey* (ишәк) refers to people who cannot succeed due to their obstinacy, even if they have good intentions.

The seme [obstinacy] was not revealed in the Russian and German paremiological units with zoonym component.

The seme [stupidity, ignorance] in German and Tatar is expressed in proverbs and saying with the component *bull* (Ochse, үгез):

German: *Ochsen* muß man schön aus dem Wege gehen [You should stay away from *bulls* (You should avoid stupid people)];

Tatar: Бер *үгезгә* бер юкә мунчак житәр [A lime-tree rope is enough for a bull (It's easy to control a stupid person)].

In the Russian language proverbs with the words *calf* and *bull-calf* have the same meaning:

Поехал за море *телёнком*, воротился *бычком* [Left home as a calf and returned as a bull-calf (returned no wiser than he went)].

The seme [stupidity, ignorance] is also realized in Russian and German paremiological units containing the word *cow* (корова, Kuh):

Russian: Не узнала *корова* новые ворота [The cow hasn't recognized the new gate];

German: Die *Kuh* weiß nichts vom Sonntag [The cows don't know it's Sunday].

The Russian and Tatar proverbs with the component *pig* (свинья, дуңгыз) also express stupidity and ignorance.

Russian: *Свинья* не знает в апельсинах вкусу [The pig doesn't know the taste of oranges];

Tatar: *Дуңгыз* ай белән көнне аермас [The pig doesn't know months and days].

Only Russian paremiological units with names of such domestic animals as *ram* (баран), *dog* (собака) and *hen* (курица) are used to describe a stupid, ignorant person:

Овца без вымени – *баран* [A sheep without udder is a ram]. This saying is used to describe a person without particular knowledge.

Глупая *собака* громче лает [A stupid dog barks louder].

Гонит черт *куршчу*, да не в ту улицу [The stupid hen runs in the wrong direction].

Proverbs with the zoonym *goose* contain the seme [stupidity, ignorance] only in the German language:

Wenn die *Gänse* Wasser sehen, müssen sie trinken [When geese see water, they have to drink].

The same connotative seme is expressed in the Tatar proverbs with the words *goat* (кәжә) and *ewe* (сарык):

Кәжәненң сакалы озын да акылы кыска [The goat has a long beard but a narrow mind];

Кәжә койрык күтәрә дип, *сарык* та койрыгын күтәргән [When the goat turns up its tail, the *ewe* does the same], it means that stupid people don't have their own opinion.

The seme [idleness, laziness] was revealed in all three languages. First of all, it is expressed in the Russian, German and Tatar paremiological units with component *dog* (собака, Hund, эт):

Russian: Сонная *собака* зайца не поймает [A sleeping dog catches no hares];

German: Wer länger schläft als sieben Stund', verschläft sein Leben wie ein *Hund* [If you sleep more than 7 hours, you will sleep your life away like a dog];

Tatar: Ат эшләр, тирен чыгарыр, *эм* ятыр, телен чыгарыр [The horse works hard and the dog lies].

The proverbs with the word *dog* meaning [idleness, laziness] are quite numerous in Tatar. We found 8 Tatar paremiological units in which the *dog* (эт) is a symbol of laziness. The dog lies, does nothing and gets food:

Эшсез ятып *эм* туена, Бушка ятып бет туена.

In the Russian language the seme [idleness, laziness] is revealed in the proverbs with the words *cat* (кошка) and *tomcat* (кот):

Ленивой *кошке* мышей не поймать [A lazy cat catches no mice];

Ленивому *коту* мыши хвост отгрызли [The mice bit off lazy tomcat's tail],

and also in the Tatar language with the word *cat* (песи):

Киштәдәге казылык өзәлеп төшә дип *неси* ачка үлгән [The *cat* died of hunger thinking that the sausage would fall from the shelf itself].

The proverbs with the component *horse* (лошадь, ат) express [idleness, laziness] in Russian and Tatar:

Russian: Сено к *лошади* не ходит [Hay doesn't come to horse];

Tatar: Үшән *атка* камчы кяр итмәс [A whip is good for a lazy horse].

German and Tatar paremiological units containing the word *bull* (Ochse, үгез) are also used to describe lazy people:

German: Die Krippe geht nicht zum *Ochsen* [Feeding rack doesn't come to bull];

Tatar: *Үгез* үшәнгә күрә, көтүгә тәкә баш [The bull is so lazy, that the herd is headed by the ram].

Only in the German language the seme [idleness, laziness] is revealed in the proverbs and sayings with the zoonym *pig* (Schwein): Die Erde ist stets gefroren für faule *Schweine* [For a lazy pig the ground is always frozen].

The Tatar paremias with the components *cow* (сыер), *hen* (тавык) and *duck* (үрдәк) also refer to lazy people:

Ялкауга мал бетмәс, *сыерга* ял бетмәс [The lazy man gets no property, the cow gets no work];

Тавык йомыркасы артына житкәч урын эзли [The hen looks for the place to lay an egg when it's too late];

Үрдәк артына су кергәч кенә йөзә башлый [The duck starts to swim only when it's wet].

The examples with the components *hen* (тавык) and *duck* (үрдәк) describe people who put off everything till the last minute.

4. Discussions

There have been numerous studies of proverbs and sayings with zoonym components in different languages: Russian, German, English, Chinese, Vietnamese, Turkish, etc., including the comparative analysis of paremiological units with zoonyms of two or more languages. For example, a recent study by A.I. Lyzlov is devoted to the analysis of the evaluative semantic criteria expressed in paremiological units of the Russian, English and German languages in which the figurative base is represented by the zoonymic image “fish” (Lyzlov, 2014). But the novelty of our study is due to the interlanguage analysis of three typologically unrelated languages, Russian, German and Tatar, as well as the thorough analysis of proverbs and sayings with domestic animal components applying different methods, such as descriptive, structural, interpretative, statistical and continuous sampling method.

5. Conclusion

The most frequently used paremiological units of the Russian, German and Tatar languages are the ones which contain the names of domestic animals related to agriculture: cattle, pigs, poultry, as well as pets, which have always been close to people.

The analysis of proverbs and sayings with zoonyms showed the prevalence of pejorative connotative semes in these paremiological units in all three languages. The paremias of the Russian, German and Tatar languages have both common and different contexts, sometimes the same pejorative connotative semes are revealed in three languages.

The presence of common evaluative semes is first of all connected with material and cultural values, social and economic life of the nation, their history, psychophysiological human activity, phenomena of animate and inanimate nature, which help the native speakers of the analyzed languages to acquire the same or similar logical images.

The use of different names of the domestic animals which carry the same connotative semes in paremiological units of the Russian, German and Tatar languages are explained by the presence of some associative differences due to extralinguistic factors.

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