

RUSSIAN PROVERBS ABOUT SPOUSES AND MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS

^aSAIWULESHI, ^bTATYANA G BOCHINA, ^cOLGA B.ABAKUMOVA

^aKazan Federal University, 18 Kremlevskaya Street, Kazan, 420008, Russia.

^bKazan Federal University, 18 Kremlevskaya Street, Kazan, 420008, Russia.

^cOrel State University, ul.komsomolskaya, 41, oruol, orlovskaya oblast', 302001, Russia.

email: ^a532290235@qq.com, ^bRusia@Prescopus.Com, ^co.b.abakumova2015@gmail.com

Abstract: The aim of this paper is in singling out stereotypical ideas of marriage and spouses' relationships as they are fixed in Russian paremic fund. Alongside with this the following tasks are being solved: making up rating of current usage of terms of relations in Russian proverbs; singling out basic logical and semantic groups (logemes), which represent stereotypical attitudes to marriage and family relationships. The language data was Russian proverbs and sayings about spouses and relatives. Subject of the research is folklore stereotypes of marriage relationships. In solving these tasks the following methods were used: analysis and synthesis, empirical watching, comparison, quantitative processing of data; component and contextual analysis, interpretation of figurative sense of proverbs, linguistic description. As a result of the study of 1948 popular proverbs and sayings about family and family relationships, it was stated that the most significant represented in the paremic fund are terms of nuclear (biological) family: husband and wife, mother and father, children, son and daughter, that form. Very high in hierarchy of family values stand god-parents, which form specific feature of Russian mentality. In Russian paremic fund stereotypical views are represented by the following logemes: Life without marriage has no full value, Marriage relationship is more important than blood ties, Husband and wife form the integral unit, Spouses make each other's life better, Family ties are strong, Quarrels do not destroy the family relationships, It is better to get married on time, Other person's spouse seems to be better than your own.

Key words: code of culture, family code, paremia, value, logeme, stereotypes

1 Introduction

Proverbs and sayings, folklore formulas are units both of language and speech that express stable social and cultural stereotypes which represent important part of ethnic culture and national variants of codes of culture. In modern linguistics researchers are attracted by study of codes of culture based on paremic material (Tarasova et al, 2014 ; Kulkova et al, 2015; Kulkova et al, 2015; Kulkova et al, 2015). In the row of ethnic codes significant place is given to family code, that is vividly presented in Russian paremic fund. According to L.B. Savenkova research, family values represent the most topical Russian proverbs group, connected with moral-ethic values (7838 units) alongside with such axiological phenomena like

truth, the good, hospitality, love, motherland etc. Paremic units about family dominate in this group (1437 out of 7838, that makes 18.33%) (Savenkova,2002, p.138-139). In this connection there is no doubt in topicality of cognizing family code of Russian language culture.

The paper aims at bringing out stereotypical presentations of marriage and marital relationships, that are fixed in Russian paremic fund. Alongside with it the paper solves the following tasks: ranking frequency of usage of terms of kinship in Russian proverbs and sayings; discovering basic logemes representing stereotypical ideas of marriage relationships and spouses.

2 Materials and methods

The material for the research was Russian paremic units about relatives and relationships in the family. The main attention is paid to people's sayings about husband and wife. The subject of the research are people's stereotypes of marital relationships between spouses. The basic source of empiric data is "Большой словарь русских пословиц (Mokienko et al, 2010), based on data from 345 collections of proverbs and dictionaries.

In research the following methods were used: 1) general linguistic methods - analysis and synthesis, description, comparison, quantitative calculation of data; 2) linguistic methods - component and contextual analysis, interpretation of figurative meaning of proverbs.

3 Results

Aiming at bringing out values of this or that type of kinship, quantitative analysis of paremic units including terms of relationships was carried out. A.B. Beliaeva studied traditional family values fixed in proverbs and came to the conclusion that they contain more than 30 names of relatives (Beliajeva,2008, 174).

We have checked out all names of relatives according to the «The Big Dictionary of Russian Proverbs» (Mokienko,2010) to represent ranking of frequency of terms of kinship in Russian paremic fund (See table 1).

Table 1. Frequency of terms of kinship in Russian proverbs

rating	Terms of kinship	Amount of proverbs
1	zhena (wife)	431
2	muzh (husband)	347
3	Deti (husband)	151
4	Otets (father)	135
5	kuma (god-mother)	133
6	Mat' (mother)	126
7	Syn (son)	123
8	Doch (daughter)	51
9	svat	47
10	Babushka (grandmother)	46
11	Ziat' (daughter's husband)	42
12	tiocsha (wife's mother)	36
13	Svekrov' (husband's mother)	28
14	nevestka (brother's wife)	27

As it is seen from Table 1, the most significant and represented in Russian paremic fund are terms of kinship, that name close relatives: husband and wife, children, mother and father, son and daughter, which is quite clear. It is the young couple, husband

rating	Terms of kinship	Amount of proverbs
15	Svakha (female parent)	26
16	kum (god-father)	24
17	Uncle	21
18	grandfather	17
19	Test' (wife's father-in-law)	16
20	parents	15
21	snokha (brother's wife, sister-in-law)	10
22	Svekr (wife's father-in-law)	9
23	Svojak (sister's husband)	9
24	Zolovka (husband's sister, sister-in-law)	8
25	nephew	2
26	Just-married wife	2
27	Shurin (wife's brother)	1

and wife, who create the family, which becomes complete with appearance of children – sons and daughters. It is necessary to note gender difference of the rating: in the pare *husband - wife* the female term prevails in quantity (431 vs 347), in the pare

father – mother the terms activity is almost the same, but in proverbs about younger generation lexeme *son* is more active than *daughter* (123 vs 51).

According to frequency in Russian proverbs there is only one lexeme that stands equal to the terms of close relatives forming the minimal 'cell of the society' – *kuma*. Tandem *kuma* and *kum* name the people who are not relatives by blood, they are spiritual parents – god-father and god-mother who call themselves this way, and so do the biological parents of their god-children (Dal, 1981. 2, 217). One must note that proverbs containing names of god-mother and god-father in Russian paremic fund are represented rather often: god-mother has the 5th place in rating, and god-father – 16th place, they are used in 133 vs 24 proverbs correspondingly. We can conclude that spiritual parents stand very high in the hierarchy of family values.

Next comes the analysis of proverbs and sayings about close relatives, forming the minimal family – husband and wife, that tell about spouses and their marital relationships. Considering Russian proverbs about marriage it is necessary to stress those, devoted to husband and wife relationships. Following that purpose we are going to single out the most current logemes (5: 46), logical and semantic units of generalized character, that represent definite groups of proverbs united by common idea. The following logemes are singled out:

3.1 Logeme 1. Life without marriage has no full value

The row of proverbs and sayings of this structural and semantic category contain the idea, that a man without wife and a woman without husband live no life of full value as they cannot even be called *man* or *woman* in full sense (See ancient meanings of the words: *husband* – 'grown-up male, man and husband', *wife* – 'grown-up female, woman and wife'): *Without husband a woman is not a wife; The wife is good when there is a husband next to her*. It is important to note that there is no gender contrast strongly stressed. According to Russian proverbs, a woman without a husband is an orphan (a person without protection who lacks family love and warmth): *Without a husband a wife is always orphan; A wife without a husband is worse than a widow*. But a man without a wife also lacks something vitally important, that is expressed by the image of a swimming bird without water or the horse without bridle, restrain: *A husband without a wife is like a goose without water; A husband without a wife is like a horse without a bridle*. Interesting are joined images that demonstrate connection, union, where each partner has his or her own functions: *Without a husband the head is not covered, without a wife the house has no roof; Without a husband is like without a head, without a wife is like without wits; Without a wife is like without a cap*.

The stereotype that only married people live life of full value is represented in the image of ideal family, where mutual understanding (совет, лад) and love are always present: *If the spouses live in mutual understanding, they may eat meat even during the Lent; If a husband and wife love and respect each other they do not need any treasures*.

3.2 Logeme 2. Relations by marriage are more important than blood ties

It is common knowledge that children do not choose their parents, brothers and sisters, that is to say, the younger generation receive relatives as given. But marriage and new family formation is connected with not biological but social factors. A person influences the origin of the new family, participates in choosing his/her marriage relative. Besides, the first family only makes a person ready for the independent life that is going to be held in a new family. Perhaps that is the reason why relationships by marriage are thought to be more important in paremic fund than blood ties: *Husband and wife are more than brother and sister; A husband for wife is dearer than a*

mother, a wife for the husband is closer than a father; A husband for wife is a father, a wife for a husband is a crown.

It is important to note, that in Russian folklore positive evaluation of relations ties between husband and wife is stressed by God's presence and protection: *A husband by wedding is a friend forever; Be content with your only wife by wedding; No one may judge a couple except for God*. That is why popular wisdom differentiated relationships by law and out of law, as for example in the following maxims: *One who loves a married woman must be beaten; Do not stare at other men's wives, but look after your own; If you love other man's wife, you will harm your own*. To put it short, if the marriage by law is protected by God, relationships out of law come from the devil: *A wife is given by God, a lover by devil*.

3.3 Logeme 3. Husband and wife form the one integral union

Popular wisdom points that husband and wife represent the one integral unit that cannot be torn apart, something that has once been united and cannot be destroyed. To express this idea images of pastry are used, made of flour and water or flour and ashes: *Husband and wife are like flour and water: you can mix them up, but can not divide; Husband and wife are like water with ashes; Husband and wife are like water with flour, mother-in-law is like leaven*. Popular maxims tell about spouses' unity both in physical and spiritual aspect: *Husband and wife are one soul; Husband and wife are one matter, one body, one spirit*. This unity may be evaluated both positively and negatively: *Husband and wife are flashes of one flint, с другой - Husband and wife are one devi; Husband and wife are one swine's meat; Husband and wife are one swamp*. The main idea is that the spouses are united, go together through life and realize their life functions: *Husband and wife like a horse and a cart: they go when are in order*.

3.4 Logeme 4. Spouses make each other's life better

Logeme claims that married spouses unite their lives forever as one unit and thus determine quality of life for each other, make it more pleasant and beautiful: *A husband is strong by the wife, and a wife is strong by the husband; A wife is famous by her husband, and a peahen by her feathers*. To tell the truth, many proverbs say that only good wife makes her husband's life better, the bad one on the contrary, makes it more complicated: *A bad wife makes your life worse, and a good one much better; A bad wife makes you old, a good one much younger; A bad wife can spoil a good husband*. There is different attitude to the bad husband: the most frequent structural and semantic variant is: *The bad husband is better than none* that is closer to the Logeme 1 (Life is not of full value without marriage): *A bad husband is still my support; Even a husband like a crow is a defence for his wife; There is always someone to defend a married woman; A wicked husband is still one's own*.

These sayings by means of wall and fence metaphors stress the main function of man in the family – to be the woman's defender, her protector or protective fence (see the semantics of prefix за- in pronouns: выйти замуж, быть замужем): *Behind my husband's back I am not afraid of anyone*. That is why the life of widow is considered to be more difficult than the life with a bad husband: *When a bad husband dies a good wife will wonder around*.

3.5 Logeme 5. Family ties are strong

In the «The Big Dictionary of Russian Proverbs» (7) one can find a group of proverbs with structure *A is not B: (because) C* about marriage. 28 of them refer to wife: *A wife is not a bast shoe – you cannot take it off; A wife is not a mitten – you cannot put her off; A wife is not a saddle – you cannot remove it from your back* etc. And only three of them with the same structure and idea are said about husband: *A husband is not a bast shoe – you cannot take him off; A husband is not a collar, but rubs the neck*. The uniting motif, invariant of interpretation of proverbs about husband and wife is presented in the idea of eternity of marriage, strength of

family ties, which is expressed in commentary parts: wife/husband cannot be taken off like a shoe, a mitten or a saddle, or put aside as a useless thing. Characteristic is parallelism, commonness of images of these proverbs with statements about a habit: *A habit is not a thing one can put off one's foot; Habit is not a mitten, one cannot hang it over the match*, which had much significance for strength of marriage (compare: *One will get used to something/ someone and will start loving it/him/her*).

3.6 Logeme 6. Quarrels do not destroy the relationships of the family

Quarrels in the family is the state of things, which should not leave the house: *A husband and a wife can quarrel but the third one should not be involved*. The whole row of proverbs point to the fact that all the quarrels and troubles that take place in the daytime (which is connected with work and social activity) are forgotten at night, when spouses are together, when they are in their house and family, where personal relationships are more important than social, when they are close physically: *A husband and a wife quarrel, but go to bed under one coat; A husband and a wife quarrel at a day time but kiss each other at night*.

3.7 Logeme 7. One must get married at proper time

The whole group of proverbs about marriage is focused on the age aspect of getting married. In vast majority of paremic units old age is evaluated negatively. Most often the proverbs negate young age of a bride alongside with the old bridegroom: *The old husband is going to be married for a short time: he will either die himself or his wife will leave him; People will gain from the young wife of the old husband; If an old man has a young wife he has a big problem; An old husband grumbles, reproves, makes his wife put off his clothes and shoes*. Though, certainly, this situation is less evil; much worse is when the wife is older than the husband: *When the husband is old and the wife is young one will be waiting for children to come; When the husband is young and the wife is old one will be waiting for lashes and scold*.

3.8 Logeme 8. Someone else's spouse seems to be better than your own

This logeme passes over the marriage relationships an old formula of envy which states that it is always better where we are absent, or the grass is greener on the other side of the fence. It reveals mostly on the wife's side. Often the situation is mocked at when someone else's wife is appreciated better than one's own: *Someone else's wife is always better/sweeter than one's own*. This idea can be expressed not only by literary maxims, but also metaphorically by means of connotative antonyms of folklore character: *One's own wife is a snake; someone else's wife is lovely; Someone else's wife is a she-swan, one's own is a bitter wormwood*.

Some remarks about the last proverb are to be made. According to traditional folklore symbols swan is a symbol not only of a young good-looking woman, but also of the beauty, of all the light and the good as opposed to the dark (Compare: a white swan – is a girl as an antipode to a grey goose – a married woman, and to the raven – a symbol of the darkness (Potebnia, 1989, p. 310), and wormwood like other bitter plants is a symbol of trouble and sadness (9: 297). Considering the language of folklore one can tell that words *лебедь* and *польнь* are the signs of super positive and super negative evaluations that can be applied not only to a woman, but to a man as well as to the objects of the surrounding world. Domineering evaluative components in the meanings of this pair is revealed through morphological and syntagmatic indicators: affectionate-diminutive suffix *-ушк* (лебедушка) and tautological word combination *польнь горькая* (bitter bitterness) (See indicators of evaluation of folklore word in (Potebnia, 1989, p. 153)).

Thus the paremic fund, the proverbs of marriage stress attractiveness of someone else's wife, but at the same time they state that it is dangerous wrong situation, that can lead to a sin: *The devil puts a*

spoon of honey into someone else's wife; The devil puts honey into stranger's wife and pours vinegar into one's own. Many sayings exist that speak of attractiveness of someone else's husband, but practically all of them underline the strength of marriage ties: *Someone else's husband is sweet, but he will not live with me, my own is hateful but I must drag myself along with him*.

4 Conclusion

In Russian paremic fund one can come across almost all names of relatives according to family relationships, except for the words *plemiannitsa* (niece), *svojachenitsa* (wife's sister), *prikumok* (god-father in 2d or 3d degree). Based on analysis of 1948 popular sayings about family and family relations, fixed in "Большой словарь русских пословиц" (6), we managed to discover frequency rating of terms of kinship in Russian paremic units. The most frequent are *wife* (431), *husband* (347), *children* (151), *father* (135), *god-mother* (133), *mother* (126), *son* (123), *daughter* (51). The most significant in paremic fund are terms of kinship, naming close relatives: husband and wife, *mother and father*, *children – son and daughter*, that constitute the minimal family – spouses and their children, who live under the same roof, that is a so called nuclear (biological family). Very high in family hierarchy stand god-parents (*кума, кум*), that shows specific features of Russian mentality.

5 Summary

In Russian paremic fund the main stereotypes of spouses' and marriage relationships are expressed in the following logemes: 1) Life without marriage has no full value; 2) Relations by marriage are more important than blood ties; 3) Husband and wife form the one integral union; 4) Spouses make each other's life better; 5) Family ties are strong; 6) Quarrels do not destroy the relationships of the family; 7) One must get married at proper time; 8) Someone else's spouse seems to be better than your own.

Acknowledgement

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

References

1. Beliajeva A.B. *Traditional family values* // Bulletin of Tambov State University. Series: Humanitarian sciences, 2008, № 11(67). P.170-175.
2. Dal V. *Explanatory Dictionary of Current Russian Language*. Vol. 1-4. Moscow: Russkijazyk, 1981.
3. Kulkova M. A., Fattakhova N.N., Zinecker T. *Paremiological text hermeneutics (in Russian and German)* // Journal of Language and Literature, 2015.- Vol. 6. - №. 2. - Iss.2. - Pp. 356-360.
4. Kulkova M.A., Galimullina R.I. *Human Factor in Paramiology: The Social vs. The Individual* // The Social Sciences, 2015.- Vol. 10.- №5. - Pp. 586-589.
5. Kulkova M.A., Rakhimova A.E., Zinecker T. *Hermeneutical analysis of paroemiological texts with semantics of permission* // Journal of language and literature, 2015. – Vol. 6. – № 1. - P. 297-300.
6. Savenkova L.B. *Russian Paremiology: semantic and language-cultural aspects*. Rostov-on-Don: Rostov State University, 2002. 240 p.
7. Mokienco V.M., Nikitina T.G., Nikolaeva E.K. *The Big Dictionary of Russian Proverbs*. Moscow: OLMA Media Grupp, 2010. 1024 p.
8. Potebnia A.A. *Word and Myth*. Moscow: Pravda, 1989. 622 p.
9. Tarasova F.H., Mukharlyamova L.R. *Modelling of phraseosemantic groups in the system of the Tatar, Russian and English paroemias (on the examples of proverbs and sayings with "food" component)* // Journal of Language and Literature, 2014. - Vol. 5. - № 3.- Pp. 196-202.