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# GERMAN AND YAKUT PROVERBS CONSTITUTING ETHNOCULTURAL KNOWLEDGE OF MAN

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## Abstract

Comparative analysis of proverbs within the framework of culture and in relation with cognitive activity of man is one of the promising directions in the modern Linguistics. The language is reflection and record of culture having a cumulative function. The body of this knowledge recorded in linguistic form is the linguistic picture of the world. In general, the linguistic picture of the world is consistent with the logical reflection of the world in people's mentality.

Proverbs generalize a nation's experience derived from its social practices and contain instructive statements. The purpose of the paper is to provide a comparative analysis of proverbs of the modern German and Yakut languages constituting ethnocultural knowledge of man. In general, this study is a systematic description of the concept sphere 'characteristic of man' in the paremiological system of the modern German and Yakut languages. Semantic component of proverbs possesses both globally reinterpreted meaning of all proverb components and partially or fully motivated meaning. The analysis revealed the body of structures representing knowledge, whereby speakers quantize the reality. Research and comparison of German and Yakut paremiology can serve as a base for further research into development of scientific basis of formation of ethnocultural knowledge of man.

*Keywords:* concept, semantics, figurativeness, typology, ethnocultural

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## 1. Introduction

Comparative study of paremiology within the framework of culture and in relation with cognitive activity of man is one of promising directions of the modern Linguistics. The language is reflection and record of culture with a cumulative function, i.e. accumulating and storing records on precious knowledge in the vocabulary. Hence, the language is a part of social memory and represents a body of meanings comprising an orientation basis not only for speech but also any other, e.g. cognitive activity. The body of this knowledge recorded in linguistic form is the linguistic picture of the world. In general, the linguistic picture of the world is consistent with the logical reflection of the world in people's mentality and represents the broadest concept reflecting both

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naive and scientific world view of a nation which objectifies at the definition level of the study of lexical units. The principle of explanation gains actual content when studying proverbs of the modern German and Yakut languages because interrelation of sciences allows revealing different types of explanations and attach rational meaning to each of them. The paremiological picture of the world is referred to here as a segment of the naïve linguistic picture of the world involving paremiological corpus of a nation.

## **2. Discussion**

The paremiological segment of the linguistic picture of the world is a component of the naïve picture of the world which reflects the most archaic layers of the national mentality as well as stages of historical development of personality. Proverbs generalize a nation's experience derived from its social practices and contain instructive statements. Proverbs and sayings have been studied by many scholars [1-9]. Proverbs and sayings are texts that had a precedent in culture, social life, so they are described as precedent texts in modern science [10-12]. The purpose of the paper is to provide a comparative analysis of proverbs of the modern German and Yakut languages constituting ethnocultural knowledge of man. The paper analyses modern German and Yakut proverbs meanings, which are determined by lexicographic sources, paremiological dictionaries and compendia [13-15]. Semantic component of proverbs possesses both globally reinterpreted meaning of all proverb components and partially or fully motivated meaning.

### ***2.1. Globally reinterpreted meaning of proverbs***

Too many cooks spoil the broth (German proverb – Gp).

You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours (Gp).

A new broom sweeps clean (Gp).

(They) broke the forked branch (Yakut proverb - Yp) – (They) broke up forever.

The one with horns as long as arms open has gotten into him (Yp) – The devil has gotten into him.

They are such people that water will not leak between them (Yp) – They are close friends.

### ***2.2. Partially reinterpreted proverbs***

The old love doesn't rust (Gp).

Time is the best doctor (Gp).

Lies has short legs (Gp).

As they say, (he) still hasn't grown wise although it's time for him to step on his moustache and beard (Yp).

As they say, he owes me for scraping off the pot walls (Yp). (It is said when one reminds of a trivial debt, favour).

For the unskilled cry the trees of a dark forest (Yp).

### **2.3. Motivated meanings of proverbs**

The one who takes risk wins (Gp).

All is well that ends well (Gp).

A riding man is not a fellow traveller to a walking man (Yp).

Foolish head doesn't give rest to the legs (Yp).

One cannot keep an awl in a bladder (Yp) – Murder will out.

Paremiology of the modern German and Yakut languages pays much attention to the language itself, for example:

Word of honour (Gp).

The one who doesn't speak any foreign languages, doesn't know anything of his own (Gp).

Proverbs are the wisdom of streets (Gp).

One cannot be replete by beautiful words only (Gp).

A clever tongue will take you anywhere (Gp).

The human word is an arrow (Yp).

A proverb is a parable of ancestors (Yp).

The tongue has no bones (Yp).

The word said will not be heard (Yp).

Little words are sweet, many words make sick (Yp).

In general, this study is a systematic description of the concept sphere ‘characteristics of man’ in the paremiological system of the modern German and Yakut languages. There are many proverbs characterizing man in the languages under comparison, e.g.:

Appearances are deceiving (Don't judge a book by its cover/Beauty is only skin deep) (Gp).

One travels all across the country with a hat in the hand - Do well and have well (Gp).

One can judge a good master by his work - The work praises the artist (Gp).

He laughs best who laughs last (Gp).

The two-legged (a man) is motley inside, the bird outside (Yp).

A good man has three belts (Yp).

A man with the heart able to beat, nerves able to excited, blood able to rise (Yp).

A man having a go to pray and a trial to try (Yp) – A social and moral man.

Seeds love fertile soil, people love a good man (Yp).

The analysis revealed the body of structures representing knowledge, whereby speakers quantize the reality. The analysis of modern German and

Yakut proverbs showed that the quantity of proverbs with positive characteristics of man is less than those with negative characteristics, e.g.:

*'A clever man':*

A clever man foresees (provides for) (Gp).

The one who's cleverer yields (to) (Gp).

A clever man escapes death by his wit (intellect) (Yp).

The bird is (judged, good) by its colour, the man by his wit (Yp).

*'A brave man':*

The world belongs to the brave (Gp).

No risk, no gain (Gp).

The man is (judged, good) by his courage, the bear by his claws (Yp).

His courage is as small as a hat, his kindness is as small as a mitten (Yp).

Negative characteristics of man objectifies the following concepts: a bad man, a liar, a cowardly man, a boastful man, a stupid man, an arrogant man, a greedy man, a lazy man, a thief.

*'A bad man':*

Drunkenness reveals what soberness conceals (Gp).

Smaller pots boil away faster (small fry are easier out of temper) (Gp).

He is better not to approach if you have something to eat for dinner (Yp).

His tongue is larger than his mouth, his leg is larger than the road (Yp) -

About people with untimely words and awkward actions.

*'A liar':*

He that once deceives is ever suspected (Gp).

Still water run deep (Gp).

When he says 'water' - it's snow, when he says 'snow' – it's water (Yp).

This man is as slippery as a fish (Yp).

*'A cowardly man':*

A cower is someone who thinks with legs in a dangerous situation (Gp).

Fear is the only thing that breeds faster than rabbits (Gp).

A cower is afraid of his shadow (Yp).

If you meet a match that will be a toy dog (Yp).

*'A boastful man':*

Boasting oneself stinks (Gp).

In the evening one may praise the day (Gp).

Stupidity and arrogance grow a tone tree (Gp).

Bragging, he is ready to break his neck (Yp).

A stupid man is arrogant, a boastful man is vain (Yp).

He is awfully dandified, extremely vain (Yp).

*'A stupid man':*

Too much laughter discovers folly (Gp).

He who doesn't like wine, women, and songs, is a fool lifelong (Gp).

Ironically, answer one's ill - founded hope (Yp).

(Having) poor thought - feeble mind (Yp).

Foolish head doesn't give rest to the legs (Yp) - Little wit in the head makes much work for the feet.

A foolish man is like a crazy woman (Yp).

*'An arrogant man':*

Arrogance rarely does good (Gp).

Pride goes before a fall (Gp).

Puffed up with conceit (Gp).

The one you disdain may be (do) seven times better (Yp).

Watch out that the one you disdain would catch your legs (Yp).

*'A greedy man':*

Greed is the root of evil (Gp).

It's better to dislocate the stomach than to give anything to the host (Gp).

One thinks that when he gives something, he cuts off his five fingers (Yp).

His greed is more than himself (Yp).

*'A lazy man':*

The fool stomach doesn't like to study (Gp).

Bad seamstress uses a long thread (Gp).

A lazy man always has an excuse (Yp).

A lazy man chooses easier work, better food (Yp).

*'A thief':*

We hang little thieves and take off our hats to great ones (Gp).

Opportunity makes a thief (Gp).

A thief has three shadows (Yp).

A thief has hundreds traces (Yp).

The comparison of German and Yakut proverbs revealed the following paremiological universalia:

A prophet is not without honour save in his own country (Gp).

Eggs can't teach the hen (Gp).

Rome was not built in a day (Gp).

The road to hell is paved with good intentions (Gp).

A match made in Heaven (Gp).

Like the shepherd, like the herd (Gp) – Like priest, like people.

A clean conscience is a good pillow (Gp).

He that will not work shall not eat (Yp).

One cannot keep an awl in a bladder (Yp) - Murder will out.

He sees an imperfection of another man as small as a hair, but he doesn't see his own imperfection as large as a log (Yp) - One sees the speck in another's eye and ignores the log in his own.

Little wit in the head makes much work for the feet (Yp).

Thought thrives on conflict (Yp).

Truth doesn't go down in water, doesn't burn in fire (Yp) - Truth will out.

The national picture of the world is represented in uniformity of physical and verbal behaviour of people in stereotypic situations, concepts, propositions, paremiology, e.g.:

If you hear a song, you'll find yourself a shelter there as bad people don't sing songs (Gp).

One man's owl is another man's nightingale (Gp) – One man's meat is another man's poison.

It's better to have a louse in the soup than no meat at all (Gp) – It's better to have something than nothing at all.

The young tweet as the old used to sing (Gp) - Like father, like son; it runs in the family.

(They) broke the forked branch (Yp) – (They) broke up forever.

A bright thought as little as a moxa is better than a black thought as big as a camel (Yp).

A hare with the forest doesn't fall, a man with the family doesn't fall down (Yp).

As it's said, it's always Mottoyo's fault (Yp).

He is held up as an object of ridicule for a particoloured dog, an object of mockery for a grey dog (Yp).

The ended up cannot be ladled, the spilled cannot be filled up (Yp).

Let us consider the concept analysis of German and Yakut paremiology in detail. The interlinguistic equivalency of German and Yakut proverbs is quite rare due to the fact that the languages under consideration belong to different groups – Germanic and Turkic. For example, the compared proverbs ‘There's no smoke without fire’ (Gp) and ‘A tree doesn't swing without wind’ (Yp) have common meaning ‘nothing happens without reason’. The components ‘smoke’ and ‘fire’ are used in German, ‘wind’ and ‘tree’ are used in Yakut. There is a Yakut synonym proverb ‘A trouble has a thread (cause), unhappiness has a way’. The proverb ‘He who does not work, shall not eat’ is equivalent in both languages. Invariant features of proverbs are manifested in one lexico-semantic or subject group of compared proverb components. Their lexical and grammatical differences are determined by the systems of the compared languages. The German proverb ‘What one doesn't have in the head, one must have in the legs’ in form of a complex sentence corresponds with the Yakut proverb ‘Foolish head doesn't give rest to the legs’ in form of a simple sentence. The subordinate clause with neutral meaning ‘What one doesn't have in the head’ (Gp) corresponds with the word group ‘foolish head (fool's head)’ of the Yakut language. The main clause ‘one must have in the legs’ (Gp) corresponds with the word combination ‘doesn't give rest to the legs’ of the Yakut language. In general, both proverbs mean ‘Little wit in the head makes much work for the feet’ where the components explicit the meanings ‘head’ and ‘leg’ respectively.

The Biblical phrase ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth’ (Gp) has its analogue in the Yakut proverb ‘A horn for a horn, a tooth for a tooth, a hoof for a hoof’ where the components ‘horn’ and ‘hoof’ reflect the specifics of the environment by the language itself. When comparing these German and Yakut proverbs, match only the component ‘tooth’. Instead of the component ‘eye’ the somatisms ‘horn’ and ‘hoof’ are used, which results in component extension of the Yakut proverb. The German proverb ‘A man, a word’ (An honest man's word is as good as his bond) corresponds with the Yakut proverb ‘A good horse - one urging on, a good man – one word’ (One urging on is enough for a good

horse, a good man always keeps his word). In contrast to the German proverb, the Yakut proverb has a syntactically complicated form, namely, a compound sentence. The Yakut proverb additionally provides the comparison with a good horse for which just one urging on is enough.

The semantic commonness of the proverbs ‘You scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours’ (Gp) and ‘A raven won’t peck out another raven’s eye, one person in charge won’t let down another one’ differ in structure variance of proverb components – a simple extended sentence and a compound sentence. The original meaning of the former proverb is ‘One hand washes the other’, the latter ‘A raven won’t peck out another raven’s eye, one person in charge won’t let down another one’. The direct contact of man with nature left its mark on the Yakut language, in particular, this proverb uses an zoonym ‘raven’ and an archaism ‘a person in charge, a chief’ meaning a man himself in contrast to the German proverb, where a pars pro toto ‘a hand’ is used. The semantic commonness is characteristic for another Yakut proverb ‘A knife won’t cut its handle, a raven won’t peck out another raven’s eye’.

In national specific proverbs of the German language there are no lexically marked components, specific semantics id characteristic for all the direct meaning of the word group which contains particular customs, traditions, superstitions, etc. as its prototype, e.g.: ‘So many countries, so many customs’ (Gp) and ‘Every country has its glory, every glade has its name’ (Yp).

A particular part of national specific proverbs of the German language is determined by their peculiarity based both on figurativeness and the denoted concept. The ethnic specifics of the proverbs ‘Better a sparrow in the hand than a dove on the roof’ (Gp) and ‘Following a mallard, he lost a teal’ (Yp) is expressed in the difference of the zoonym components ‘sparrow’ (Gp) and ‘mallard’ (Yp), ‘dove’ (Gp) and ‘teal’ (Yp) which refer to the same thematic group ‘Birds’. The common meaning of the proverbs is ‘A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush’.

The proverb ‘Old age doesn’t protect against stupidity’ (Gp) is literally translated into Russian ‘Even an old woman can make a blunder’. The analogue Yakut proverb ‘As they say: he is still not wise though it’s time for him to step on his moustache and beard’ possesses both different structure and conceptual meaning.

While the German proverb ‘Tell me who you’re acquainted with and I’ll tell you who you are’ has an abstract meaning, the Yakut proverb ‘If one lives with an skilled man one becomes skilled, if one lives with a raven one becomes a raven’ involves clarifying components ‘skilled’ and ‘raven’.

### **3. Conclusion**

Thereby, the study of the typologically common and the nationally specific in paremiology by comparative investigation of proverbs of the modern German and Yakut languages is of interest and holds promise. It contributes to development of cognitive linguistics in the context of culture and national world

view. The research results can be used when studying objectification of other sociocultural concepts at the paremiological level. Research and comparison of German and Yakut paremiology can serve as a base for further research into development of scientific basis of formation of ethnocultural knowledge of man.

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