

## **SOME PECULIARITIES IN THE USAGE OF KAZAKH, ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS: PROVERBS, SAYINGS AND IDIOMS**

*A.T. Alipova and G.H. Bekkozhanova  
Kazakh Pedagogical Abay University, Almaty, Kazakhstan*

### **ABSTRACT**

The word-stock of a language is usually enriched by units of language such as: words, word-groups and/or by phraseological units. The main difference between words and phrases lies in their form and meaning. A word is a smaller unit than a phrase. Phrases appear in languages describing the nation's character, traditions and customs. As every nation has its own history, customs and traditions, the common history of humanity connects common things and phenomena such as: nature, war, animals, food, plants etc. Proverbs have mostly been formulated and coined on the basis of these topics. Idioms, proverbs and sayings are used to make a language colourful and fascinating; they are commonly used in all types of language: formal, informal, spoken or written. It is difficult to understand the meaning of the idioms from the words it consists of. If someone does not know that or another idiom they will not understand the whole text or speech. In our research work we would like to reveal the structural, semantic and cognitive peculiarities in the usage and development of phraseological units, mainly the most useful and colourful, ready-made parts, such as proverbs and sayings.

### **PROVERBS AND SAYINGS, IDIOMS: CLASSIFICATION OF PROVERBS**

Firstly, proverbs and sayings can be classified by the thematic units. Many linguists consider phraseological units as word-groups that cannot be made in the process of speaking; they exist in the language as ready-made units. A straight way to improve your understanding of the world culture, people and history is to study proverbs and sayings of different languages. Proverbs, sayings and quotes will teach many apt observations made by people, translated from ancient written sources, and borrowed from literary works.

Proverbs and sayings are compiled in special dictionaries of proverbs and sayings. They have been analyzed and given classifications by many scholars of different languages. Phraseological units can be classified according to the ways they are formed, according to the degree of the motivation of their

meaning, according to their structure, and according to their part-of-speech meaning. These criteria of classification are similar in different languages, as proverbs and sayings can be met in different languages of the world. But different people's usage and perceptions of proverbs and sayings differ from idioms, because they see things and concepts in their own ways. For example, idioms are used frequently in the English language rather than proverbs and sayings. In modern English some proverbs are considered to be old-fashioned, so as a result, they are modified and shortened. For example:

*A stitch in time saves nine became a stitch in time*

*A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush – a bird in the hand*

*Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today – Never put off till tomorrow*

*Don't count your chickens until they are hatched – Don't count your chicken*

As a result young generation may not understand the meanings of short proverbs, so if they don't know their meaning they would avoid using the proverbs in their speech. There is a threat of disappearing of proverbs from the English language. However, in Kazakh language proverbs and sayings are popular among all the generations. Proverbs are used by elder people and young people and proverbs are widely used in media as well. On the one hand, according to Kazakh traditions young people ought to respect elder people and listen to their advice. On the other hand, proverbs are used to describe different situations and correspond to every situation in Kazakh language. Proverbs are piece of wisdom inherited from our experienced ancestors. The most frequently used Kazakh proverbs are the followings:

*There is no place like your Motherland.*

*If sister-in-laws are friendly, there is much food.*

*The home with a child is a bazaar; the childless home is a grave.*

*My house is my song and my bed.*

But there are no idioms in the Kazakh language.

Idioms are also collocations, because they consist of several words that tend to be used together, but the difference is that we can't guess the meaning of the whole idiom from the meanings of its parts. Idioms are phraseological units with a transferred meaning. They can be completely or partially transferred.

For instance: *to add fuel to the fire/flame* (to make an argument or a bad situation worse); its Russian equivalent is *подливать масло в огонь* which means *to pour the oil to the fire* and its Kazakh equivalent is *отқа май құю* which has the same meaning.

Idioms are inseparable ready-made phraseological units used to colour speech, while proverbs and sayings typically have moral principles. Proverbs and sayings have international character and mostly have the same meaning and form in different languages. They are coined by people whose names are unknown, and they teach people the norms and moral principles of life. At the same time, they enrich our language and reveal the culture of different people. Even though these phrases are different in different languages, they have common understandings and meanings. For example: the English proverb *The last straw breaks the camel's back* means the last in a series of unpleasant events which finally makes you feel that you cannot continue to accept a bad situation. This has the same meaning in Russian *Последняя соломинка ломает спину верблюда* and in Kazakh means *the last camel's luggage is heavy* which is translated as *Соңғы түйенің жүгі ауыр*.

Proverbs and sayings are the habitual associations of a word in a language with other particular words. Speakers become accustomed to such collocations. Very often they are related to the referential and situational meaning of words. Sometimes there are collocations, which are removed from the reference to extra-linguistic reality. While comparing and contrasting proverbs in different languages we can find their equivalents in other languages by their meaning. As stated before, the classification system starts with main themes [3, p. 33], which for the most part represent basic aspects of human life and it is common to all languages. These themes in Kazakh, English and Russian languages are common and they are easily seen in the following examples:

- A. **Practical knowledge of nature:** for example: the English proverb *an oak is not felled with one stroke* has the same function and equivalent in Russian and Kazakh: *Одним ударом дуба не свалишь* and *Еменді бір ұрып құлата алмайсың*.
- B. **Faith and basic attitudes:** *east or west, home is best – В гостях хорошо, а дома лучше* in Russian which is translated as *to be a guest is good but to be at home is better* and in Kazakh *Өз үйім-өлең төсегім* means *my home is my song and my bed*.
- C. **Basic observations and socio-logics:** *if you cannot see the bottom, do not cross the river – Не зная броду, не суйся в воду – Өткелін білмей өзенге түспе*. All the three variants have the same meaning.
- D. **The world and human life:** *he lives long that lives well – В доброй житье кудри вьются - Көңілдінің үйінде күнде мейрам, күнде той*. This proverb has no stylistic colouring in comparative languages. They are simple sentences which ordinary people use in

everyday speech and have become a proverb as a result of long and frequent use.

- E. Sense of proportion:** *eat at pleasure, drink with measure – Ешь волю, пей в меру* (Russian) – *Қанағат қарын тойғызар* (Kazakh).
- F. Concepts of morality:** *handsome is that handsome does – Не тот хорош, кто лицом пригож, а тот, кто на деле гож.* The Russian variant is translated as *that is not good who is handsome but who does properly – Тәні сұлу – сұлу емес, жаны сұлу – сұлу* and the Kazakh variant is *who has handsome body is not handsome, who has handsome soul is handsome.*
- G. Social life:** *he is lifeless who is faultless – Безгрешен только мертвый* (Russian: only a dead person is sinless) – *Жаңылмайтын жақ болмас, сүрінбейтін тұяқ болмас.* These types of proverbs are based on experience of people in the society as a result of their relationship, manners and behavior.
- H. Social interaction:** *a bad beginning makes a bad ending – Плохому началу – плохой конец* (Russian is the same) – *Басы қатты болса аяғы тәтті болады* (in the Kazakh variant the same words are used but the meaning is different: if the beginning is bad then the end will be tasty; here is the rhyme: *қатты* and *тәтті*). Social interaction has bred the majority of proverbs and sayings in the three languages, as social status and habits of people play a most important role in the life of people.
- I. Communication:** *great talkers are great liars – Кто много говорит, тот мало делает* (Russian: who talks a lot does a little) – *Аз сөз – алтын, көп сөз – күміс* (Kazakh: few words are gold, lots of words are silver). This proverb shows that in every nation much talk has bad results such as: lie, laziness, gossips etc. These proverbs show communication in different aspects.
- J. Agreements and norms:** *do in Rome as the Romans do – В чужой монастырь со своим уставом не ходят* (Russian: To other people's monastery don't go with your rules) – *Кімнің жерін жерлесең, соның отын ота* (Kazakh: Whose place you are in, his grass you will cut). In every country people respect other's private property, if not it can be regarded as a rude and offensive manner. People mostly accept peaceful and mutual relations and negotiations between each other.

- K. Coping and learning:** Knowledge is a great power, but learning and mastering different sciences have great difficulty. Every nation advises learning, and a respect for teachers and masters. *Live and learn – Век живи, век учись* (Russian) – *Оқу инемен құдық қазғандай* (Kazakh: Learning is like digging shaft with a needle). *Don't teach a fish to swim – Не учи ученого* (Russian: Don't teach a taught man) – *Дария жанынан құдық қазба* (Kazakh: Don't dig a shaft next to the lake).
- T. Time and sense of time:** *lost time is never found again– Потерянного времени не воротить* (Russian: the same) – *Өткен іске өкінбе* (Kazakh: Don't regret the past) or *Уақытыңның босқа өткені, өміріңнің бос кеткені* (If you waste your time then you waste your life). Different people use different proverbs of time and mostly value time; at the same time, most people do not appreciate their lost time.

Under the 13 main themes of this classification there are 52 main classes [2, p. 35]. The main theme of “G. Social life” which is mentioned above has 8 main classes, for example:

**G. Social life**

- 1. kinship:** *beauty lies in lover's eyes – Не по хорошему мил, а по милому хорош* (Russian) – *Сұлу сұлу емес, сүйген сұлу* (Kazakh).
- 2. development** – a person's background: *familiarity breeds contempt – Фамильярность порождает презрение* (Russian) – *Адам сөйлескенше, жылқы кісінескенше* (Kazakh: People are strangers until they talk, horses are strangers until they neigh).
- 3. child** : parents / upbringing: *like mother, like daughter – Яблоко от яблони далеко не падает* (Russian: An apple does not fall far from the apple-tree) – *Анасын көріп, қызын ал, аяғын көріп, асын іш* (Kazakh: Look at the mother and marry her daughter, look at one's plate and eat her food) . *Little children, little sorrow, big children, big sorrow – Маленькие дети– маленькие заботы, большие дети – большие заботы* (Russian) – *Баланы жастан* (Kazakh). These proverbs are the result of long observation and experience. All people try to bring up their children as well as they can. People understand that children and their upbringing has been the most important subject of every age. As every country has its customs, proverbs of family relations and upbringing teaches young parents; but these proverbs vary from country to country as customs and traditions do. From year to year upbringing has become more complicated. For example:

**4. man/woman / ranking and position of both sexes:** *happiness takes no account of time* – *Для счастливых время не существует* (Russian) – *Бақыттылар уақытпен санаспайды* (Kazakh).

**5. marriage:** *marriage comes by destiny* – *Женишься так, как на роду написано* (Russian) – *Екі жақсы қосылса, өлгенше дос болады, екі жаман қосылса, өлгенше қас болады* (Kazakh: If a good couple marries, they will be friends whole life; if bad couple marries, they will be enemies whole life).

**6. youth/old age:** *all is good in its time* – *Всему свое время* (Russian) – *Әр нәрсе өз уақытымен* (Kazakh).

**7. health/illness:** *health is wealth* – *Здоровье лучше, чем богатство* (Russian: Health is better than wealth) – *Бірінші байлық – денсаулық* (Kazakh: The first wealth is health).

We can add other classes such as: love, betrayal, knowledge, to the list which shows people's characters, ability etc.

Phraseological units can be also classified according to syntactical norms. Phraseological units can be classified according to the parts of speech they are formed. This classification was suggested by i.v. arnold. In i.v. arnold's classification there are also sentence equivalents, proverbs, sayings and quotations [3, p. 740]. Proverbs are usually built metaphorically, e.g.: *as true as steel* – *верный как сталь* – *болаттай берік* (kazakh: as firm as steel), while sayings are as a rule non-metaphorical, e.g. *Where there is a will, there is a way* – *где есть желание, там есть и путь* – *қалауын тапса қар жанады*.

### 3. PHRASEOLOGICAL UNITS IN COMMUNICATION

Language communication is a leading function. It conveys information from one communicant to other. Despite the character of transferring information the building material of the communicative process is words, word blocks, among which are phraseological units, the units which convey this information. The informative value of these units is not equal, that is why they colour the communicative process in which they participate differently. It is clear that in order to derive a discourse from a text, we have to explore two different sites of meaning: on the one hand, the text's intrinsic linguistic or formal properties (its sounds, typography, vocabulary, grammar, and so on) and on the other hand, the extrinsic contextual factors which are taken to affect its linguistic meaning. These two interacting sites of semantic meaning are the study of formal meanings as they are encoded in the language of texts, that is, independent of writers (speakers) and readers (hearers) set in a particular context; while pragmatics is concerned with the meaning of language in discourse, that is, when it is used in an appropriate context to

achieve particular aims. Pragmatic meaning is not an alternative to semantic meaning, but complementary to it, because it is inferred from the interplay of semantic meaning with context [5, p. 18].

The pragmatic peculiarities of phraseological units are:

- a) communicative direction of phraseological units (a certain type of expression in which this unit is used);
- b) a character and a direction of a communicative effect which a phraseological unit gives;
- c) social-emotive register of phraseological unit function [6, p. 13].

The direction and character of a communicative effect made by a phraseological unit compose a very important pragmatic peculiarity of phraseological units. It is tightly connected with phraseological unit perception.

#### **4. DIFFICULTIES OF TRANSLATING IDIOMS, PROVERBS AND SAYINGS**

Idioms, proverbs and sayings are very difficult to translate. Students have to know that fixed expressions like idioms are frozen patterns of language which allow little or no variation in form and often carry meanings which cannot be deduced from their individual components [9, p.63]. The student's first problem while interpreting an idiom is to recognize that it is an idiom, as it is not always obvious. There are various types of idioms; some of them are more recognizable than others. Those idioms are those which include truth situations, eg. *it's raining cats and dogs*. However, some of them do not follow grammatical rules: eg. *the powers that be* which means the people who control things but who are not known. The more difficult an expression is to understand and the less sense it makes in a context, the more likely it is that the translator will recognize it as an idiom. The second problem is how to translate it into the target language. There are several cases in which idioms can be misinterpreted.

There are four main ways to translate an image-bearing phraseological units: 1) the image may be preserved as it is; 2) it may be partially changed; 3) it may be replaced by an utterly different image, and 4) a translated version may contain no image at all.

1. Some phraseological units may be based on some historical, mythological, biblical, etc. references: *in seventh heaven* – *на седьмом небе* (in Russian it means the same) – *төбең көкке жету* (in Kazakh it means one's head is getting the sky). Such phraseological units of the source language and the target language are called 'equivalents'; with equivalents there are no difficulties of a stylistic character. Some phraseological units may not have equivalents in the target language. Then translation is achieved

through loan translation: *no man can make a good coat with a bad cloth* – *из плохого материала хорошего платья не сошьешь* (Russian) which is translated word-by-word as *from a bad cloth a good dress is not made*. However, this can be done only if the meaning of the phrase is absolutely transparent, that is, if the figurative meaning of the phrase is easily and unmistakably deduced from its direct meaning. In this case the translated version is no longer phraseological but it retains its figurative meaning and adds to the expressiveness of the text. If the meaning is not transparent and the meaning cannot be deduced from the lexical meaning of the components, loan translation is impossible. For example, *to send somebody to Coventry* cannot be literally translated as *послать в Ковентри* which is *to send to Coventry* (which meant that punished people were sent to Coventry in the 17<sup>th</sup> century) because people from other countries are not familiar with the meaning of this expression. Some idioms seem transparent because they offer a reasonable literal meaning and their idiomatic meaning may not be easily seen. For example, *to go out with* ('to have a romantic relationship with someone') and *take someone for a ride* ('deceive or cheat someone') In this case if a student is not familiar with these idioms he can accept the literal meaning of them and misunderstand the idioms.

2. Some phraseological units of the source language and the target language may express the same idea and be based on similar though not identical images. In such cases it is possible to ignore slight differences between the meanings. And even if the meaning is partially changed in comparison with that of the source language, it can still be accepted: *burnt child dreads of the fire* – *обжегшись на молоке, на воду дует* (Russian) – *аузы күйген үрiн ишедi* (Kazakh). In this example the difference between the English, Russian and Kazakh variants seem to be rather serious: there is no lexical correspondence between the words, e.g. in the English variant, the words *burn* and *fire* are used, while in Russian it says *someone who was burnt on milk will blow on water* and the Kazakh variant is: *someone who burnt his mouth will blow while drinking*. But the image is nearly the same – he who once was burnt is afraid of everything which is hot.

3. Since the phraseological units of every language represent the history and culture of the people speaking the language, many ideas which are common to all peoples are expressed differently in different languages: For example, Welsh people say it rains *old women and sticks* whereas English people say it rains *cats and dogs* and both of them have the same meaning. The main task is to find a phraseological unit of the target language expressing the same idea and belonging to the same stylistic register as the original phraseological unit. The complete substitute of the image does not in any way change the general meaning of the proverb: for example, *too many cooks spoil the broth* – the meaning and stylistic reference of this proverb corresponds to *Қойшы көп болса қой арам өледi* in Kazakh which means that if there are many shepherds a sheep can die starving. And *У семи нянек*



*дитя без глазу* in Russian – it means that if seven nurses look after a child then he can become one-eyed. So in all cases when phraseological units have no equivalents in the target language, complete substitution of images is recommended.

4. In the source language there may exist some phraseological units that have neither equivalents nor analogues in the target language. If the image is not transparent then loan translation is impossible; such phraseological units can be translated descriptively, by free words which are not fixed or figurative. There are the main 4 ways of translating figurative phraseological units: 1) the image may be preserved as it is; 2) it may be partially changed; 3) it may be replaced by an utterly different image, and 4) a translated version may contain no image at all.

Contrastive-comparative study of phraseological units, proverbs and sayings and idioms gives us an opportunity to reveal their ethical-aesthetic characters and the functions in the context. Understanding and knowledge of different languages helps to broaden one's mind and master the learned language professionally. Comparison of three languages' set expressions has shown lots of similarities in their formation, meaning, function and pragmatics of proverbs and sayings. It shows that even they belong to different families and types of language groups and pronounce the words in different forms, the evolution and formation of human language takes its beginning from one root and source.

In classes teachers try to teach students everything they know; however the best of learning may happen outside the classroom when students are reading, listening to music, watching TV, chatting with native and non-native speakers on the internet. Therefore greater emphasis on idioms or fixed expressions should perhaps be made rather than on grammar. Different kinds of phraseological units with various learning strategies can be taught at different levels. The main goal of language teaching must be to create opportunities for students to acquire more and more language. The teacher should be a language provider and the expert who helps students notice useful and interesting knowledge. Textbooks should contain more natural language with the emphasis on activities and strategies which aid natural acquisition of the language. There is no point in learners knowing just the words themselves unless they also know the fixed collocations, idioms or proverbs with those words. The students need to know more new words with more fixed collocations increasing their collocation competence with words which they already know. It is lexis and collocation competence which allows students to read more widely, understand more quickly and speak more fluently.

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