



Comparative Analysis of Structural-Semantic Characteristics of the Russian and German Prohibitive Paremias

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Abstract

This article is devoted to the representation of the prohibitive semantic in the Russian and German paremias. The study is based on comparative analysis of structural-semantic features of the paremiological phrases containing prohibitive constructions. The groundwork of this research is presented by a collection of 1743 paremiological units (1500 Russian and 1243 German paremias), which have been selected by a method of continuous and special selection from authoritative Russian and German paremiological works, by such authors as V. P. Anikin, H. and A. Beyer, S. Wagener, K. Wander, V. I. Dal, V. P. Zhukov, K. Simrock, I.I. Illustrov, V. M. Mokienko, I. M. Snegirjov. Building on the empirical base of this research, we identified 10 Russian and 10 German syntactic structures which are explicitly expressing prohibitive semantic in proverbs, sayings and folk omens. The author of the article defines a concept of a prohibitive construction in a broad sense. During the structural-semantic analysis of the presented structures, common syntactic and semantic characteristics are identified, also along with them structural-semantic differences of the analyzed paremias are opened up.

Keywords: Linguistics; Communications; Prohibitive Construction; Paremia; Structural-Semantic Analysis.

1. Introduction

In the field of folkloristics, the semiotic analysis of proverbs has long been an assertion (Husnutdinov, Akalin, Giniyatullina, & Sagdieva, 2017; Ismael Taher, 2020; Petrova & Stefanova, 2017). The earliest clear argument in this direction goes back to the Russian folklorist and semiologist Pëtr G. Bogatyrev, a co-author of Roman Jakobson, who claimed specifically, as early as the 1930s (Bogatyrev & Crum, 1971): "The semi-iotic investigation of proverbs is one of the folklorist's most grateful duties." One should not forget that this was the time when, despite several useful studies from the 19th century and earlier, proverb research became an increasingly important subject in contextual appreciation of this argument. Nevertheless, the excellent folklorist and paremiologist Archer Taylor, considering all the accomplishments made at that time, began his seminal book on *The Proverb* with the sharp and critical remark: the proverb and related forms have long been subjects of general interest and the occasion for many books, but they have attracted little serious and detailed study. The postulation of Bogatyrev remained unheard of until the 1960s and 1970s, when semiotics, with its truly interdisciplinary focus, became increasingly important along with the rise of structuralist approaches, first in the field of linguistics, then in anthropology. In fact, at that time, different facets and aspects of the semiotics of proverbs began to be studied, which had previously been the object of paremiological research, most often indirectly, rather than directly, but now received attention from a different methodological point of view. Nevertheless, the proverb's detailed and systematic semiotic analyses still reflect some sort of desideratum research today (Taylor, 1985).

The fact that both the proverb, as the research object at stake, and semiotics, as the subject in focus, are not historically known phenomena in the international academic world, is one of the key reasons for this state of the art. While in theory, the proverb belongs to the discipline of paremiology, the latter has never been institutionally developed in the



academic world; instead the proverb has historically served as a research object for disciplines such as folkloristics, sociology, pedagogy, linguistics, and many others, all of which look at the proverb from different methodological perspectives. Similarly, the branch of science that studies signs or structures and the processes of generation and use of signs (semiosis) was a methodological technique used by individual sciences, interested in the methodological generalization of their findings (Bredis, Dimoglo, & Lomakina, 2020; Gennadievna, Aleksandrovna, & Andreevich, 2018; Orlova, Kolosova, Medvedev, & Barov, 2018; Seliverstova, 2020; Strausov, Strausova, Zavrumov, & Akopyants, 2018). Semiotic studies tend to divide semiotics into three semiotical dimensions which in keeping with Morris' Sign Theory Foundations, were later most widely differentiated in linguistics (Morris, 1938). However, due attention should be paid to the fact that they concern any kind of sign processes and not simply linguistic processes which have been carried out. Notwithstanding the fact that all of these aspects in the field of linguistics have become more important, the semiotic approach and the semiotic interpretation of the three dimensions described is much more systematic and comprehensive, and it still encompasses linguistics as the study of linguistic signs, but is of greater concern and significance. Holding this in mind, it is also of utmost importance to note that a number of dyadic relations can be abstracted for analysis amid the three-dimensional and triadic study of semiotics: a) the pragmatic dimension, b) the syntactic dimension, c) the semantic dimension. Accordingly, the three disciplines examining these dimensions are called pragmatics, syntactics, and semantics: while, according to the principle of Morris (1938), pragmatics is concerned with the relationship between users of signs and signs, syntactics is oriented towards formal relationships between signs and each other and semantics focuses on the relationships between signs and objects to which signs are applied. In this regard, it should be noted immediately that Morris has already stressed the near relationship between these three dimensions, indicating that they can only be distinguished and examined with a separate emphasis for heuristic purposes, but not really isolated, neither with regard to the use of signs nor with regard to the analysis of them. It should also be remembered that more often than not, semantics has dominated pragmatics and syntactics in the history of studies applying these definitions, indirectly or explicitly, because it has always been normal to ask for the role of pragmatic or syntactic variables and by the way, for the impact these aspects have on the overall sense (or even change of meaning) (M Pristinskaya, N Kopytina, I Sinelnikova, G Sinelnikov, & V Sherstiukova, 2019; Rahmemon, Ahangar, & Nourmohammadi, 2020; Ramilevna Kayumova, Abel'chaerovna Safina, & Arkadjewna Nefedova, 2019). In this regard, it seems that students of semiology in general and paremiologists in particular do not differ from ordinary users of signs whose cognitive behavior is primarily defined by what psychologists have called "effort after meaning." and identified as an anthropological constant (Bartlett & Bartlett, 1995; Hörmann, 2013).

Many modern researchers study prohibitive semantics issues in proverbs (Bochina, 2005; Cresti, 2020; Cull, 2018; Feldenkirchen, 1992; Haverkate, 1990; Janda, Lyashevskaya, Nessel, Rakhilina, & Tyers, 2018; Jesenšek, 2015; Mac Coinnigh, 2015; Mammad, 2014; Nielsen, 2020; Shu'aibu, 2018; Sibul, Vetrinskaya, & Grishchko, 2020; Van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2010). It should be pointed out that prohibitive in proverbs are rarely determined independently (more often –as one aspect of imperative semantics study along with the whole variety of connotational variants. In connection with this prohibitive semantics presents a wide field for scientific researches.

The analysis of paremiological units is motivated by the anthropological orientation of modern linguistics where the language is considered in close connection with the consciousness and thinking of a person, their spiritual world, values, and anti-values (Anikin, 1988).

The empirical base of this research is a catalogue of proverbs, including 1500 Russian and 1243 German sayings, proverbs, folk sayings with explicitly expressive prohibitive semantics.

We refer prohibitive constructions to paremiological units with prohibitive semantics (Durnea, 2017). We understand structures, explicitly expressing in failure to carry out actions by means of different grammar and syntactic constructions with negation, expressed on the frame "negation+imperative" impersonal infinitive-predicative and modal constructions. Also, in this investigation two synthetic structures are presented, grammatically implicitly express the semantics of prohibitive: *sin / sinly + Infinitive* (Ger. *sündig + sein / Substantiv + ist + Sünde*) and proverb with imperative forms of verbs (*ver*)*schweigen / молчать*.

The existence in the empirical basis of this study of such constructions as *sin / sinly + Infinitive* and *sündig + sein / Substantiv + ist + Sünde* is explained by the fact that religion also combines beliefs and actions to help people solve the problem of their existence. It is based on the belief in the existence of God. Moreover, it is considered as a combination

of actions by which religious people can demonstrate their attitudes to God and rules of behaviour which they must follow (Alekseeva & Singatullova, 2018).

1.1. Research Objective

This article is dedicated to the representation in the Russian and German paremiology of the prohibitive semantics.

2. Material and Methods

A number of research methods are used to study Russian and German paremiology with prohibitive semantics: the traditional descriptive method, the component analysis method, statistical method.

In addition, in solving theoretical and practical problems, the following general scientific methods are used: generalization, specific scientific methods of component and the method of linguocultural studies interpretation.

Using the method of continuous and specific sampling of popular sayings from authoritative paremiographical sources, a study card file was compiled, consisting of 1,743 Russian and German paremiological sayings.

3. Results and Discussion

During this investigation 10 prohibitive constructions in Russian language were revealed and 10- in German. We refer to Russian prohibitive constructions: *не + императив 2 л., ед. ч.* (88%); *не + 3 л., мн. ч.* (6%); *грех / грешно + инфинитив* (1,2%); *императив + не..., (а, да, но)...* (1%); *нельзя + инфинитив* (1%); *императивные формы глагола “молчать”* (0,6%); *не + императив 2 л., мн. ч.* (0,5%); *не велит / не велят + инфинитив* (0,5%); *ничего + инфинитив* (0,4%); *не + инфинитив* (0,2%).

To German proverbs with prohibitive semantics we refer: *man/es + Modalverb + Negationswort + Infinitiv* (35%); *Imperativ 2. Person Singular + Negationswort* (26%); *Substantiv / Pronomen + Modalverb + Negationswort + Infinitiv* (23%); *sein + nicht + zu + Infinitiv* (10%); *man + Verb 3. Person Singular + Negationswort* (4%); *“schweigen” im Imperativ* (1%); *verboten sein* (0,7%); *Imperativ 2. Person Plural + Negationswort* (0,1%); *sündig + sein / Substantiv + ist + Sünde* (0,1%); *kein + Substantiv* (0,1%).

We can point out, that among presented constructions, a number of structures, have semantic, syntactic and grammar compliance in comparative languages:

1) Prohibitive constructions of Russian proverbs *не + императив 2 л., ед. ч.* (*Не продавай шкуры, не убив медведя* (Shchetinina, 2018) – “Don’t sell the skins without killing the bear”; *Не пугай сокола вороной* (Snegirev, 1999) – “Don’t scare the Falcon with a crow”; *“Не радуйся, нашедши, не плачь, потеряв”* (Dal, 2005) – “Don’t be happy when you find, don’t cry when you lose”); *императив + не..., (а, да, но)...* (*Выбирай жену не в хороводе, а в огороде* (Anikin, 1988) – “Choose a wife not in a round dance but in garden”; *“Бойся не того, кто кричит, а того, кто молчит”* (Snegirev, 1999) – “Don’t be afraid of a man, who scream but who keeps silence”; *Будь гол, да не вор, а беден, но честен* (Snegirev, 1999) – “Be naked, but not thief, poor but honest”) corresponds German structure *Imperativ 2. Person Singular + Negationswort*: *Kümmere dich nicht um ungelegte Eier* (Simrock, 2003) – “Don’t worry ahead of time”; *Kaufe nicht, was du siehst, sondern was du brauchst* – “Buy what you need not what you”; *Sage nicht, was da verschweigen sollt* (Wander & Barth, 1979) – “Don’t say things that need to be kept quiet”; *Sieh nicht über dich, sondern unter dich* (Simrock, 2003) – “Look not at others, but at yourself”. It should be taken into consideration that such constructions as *не + императив 2 л., ед. ч.* и *Imperativ 2. Person Singular + Negationswort* refer to the commonest constructions, including 88% и 26% respectively. From the semantics point of view, such constructions are entirely identical, however from the syntactic point of view have differences in negation: in Russian constructions, including negation Imperative, negation takes place before the nomination of action and in German- after the verb.

Besides, Russian proverbs have supplementary syntactic variations. Russian proverbs with component *не + императив 2 л., ед. ч.* can be expressed by: a) simple Imperative sentences (*С нагой правдой в люди не кажись* (Dal, 2005) – “Don’t show up with naked truth”); b) Sentences with opposition of negative Imperative and positive alternative. (*На себя не наговаривай, а с друга сговаривай* (Anikin, 1988) – “Don’t talk about yourself, covariate your friend”); c) Sentences with the opposition of negative Imperative and synonymic repetitions (*Не бери приданое, бери милу девицу* (Margulis & Kholodnaya, 2015) – “Don’t take dowry, take a pretty girl”). From T. G. Bochina’s point of



view, negation in paremia are transferred, «choice is made between two actions, between objects (features, tools, means) of one and the same action» (Bochina, 2005); d) sentences with preventive semantics (*He esse с барями вишен – костями глаза выбьют* (Anikin, 1957) – “Don’t eat cherries with barins, your eyes will be beaten by bones”).

Among mentioned variations equivalents in German have: a) proverbs, expressed with simple imperative sentences: *Vergiß das Beste nicht* (Simrock, 2003)– “Don’t forget the good things”; *Sei kein Frosch!* (Wander & Barth, 1979)– “Don’t be a fool”; *Zwischen Tür und Wand lege niemand seine Hand* (Simrock, 2003)– “Don’t put your hands between the door and the wall”; b) proverbs with opposition of negative Imperative and positive alternative: *Sage nicht alles, was du weißt; wisse aber alles, was du sagst* (Wander & Barth, 1979)– “Don’t say that you know; but know all that you say”; *Frage nicht wie, sondern was man redet* (Simrock, 2003)– “Don’t ask how, but what they say”; *Vergiss nicht alte Bräuche, sondern alte Missbräuche* (Wander & Barth, 1979)– “Forget not old customs, but old unfortune”.

2) Indefinite-personal constructions in proverbs of Russian and German languages *man + Verb 3. Person Singular + Negationswort* (4%) и *не + 3 л. ед. ч.* (6%) have exact semantic equivalent and are not widely spread. Besides, it should be noted, that in paremiological units of comparative languages there is no argumentative part, address refers to the “whole”: *За очи коня не купят* (Dal, 2005) – “A horse is not sold by eyes”; *В Тулу со своим самоваром не ездят* (Zhukov, 1991) – “Don’t go with your gingerbread to Tula”; *He убив медведя, кожу не продают* (Dal, 2005) – “Without killing a bear, the skin is not sold”; *Im Hause des Gehängten redet man nicht vom Strick* (Beyer & Beyer, 1987) – “Don’t mention rope in the house of a hanged man”; *In kalten Ofen backt man kein Brot* (Simrock, 2003)– “A bread is not baked in a cold oven”; *Die Bratwurst sucht man nicht im Hundestall* (Simrock, 2003)– “They don’t look for sausages in a doghouse” and so on.

3) Proverbs with Imperative verbs ‘(ver)schweigen’ / ‘молчать’- keep silence) have entire syntactic, semantic, and grammar equivalents. Proverbs, including such components, characterised by the frequency of use in both languages (about 1%). Proverbs, which have such component of Imperative mood, we refer to prohibitive constructions on the appearance of prohibitive semantic of this verb “молчи” = keep silence/ don’t speak: *Если сидишь на печи, то побольше молчи* (Anikin, 1988) – “If you’re sitting on the stove, keep your mouth shut”; *Молчи, дурак, за умного сойдешь* (Mokienko, Nikitina, & Nikolaeva, 2010) – “Don’t talk, you are a smart person”; *Нашел молчи, потерял – молчи* (Dal, 2005) – “Found – shut up, you lost, shut up”; *Verschweige, was du tun willst, so kommt dir niemand dazwischen* (Simrock, 2003)– “Keep quiet about what you want to do”; *Sprich, was besser ist als nichts, oder schweige* (Wander & Barth, 1979) – “Tell me what’s better than nothing, or don’t say anything”; *Wer sich schuldig weiß, der schweige* (Wander & Barth, 1979)– “Don’t say anything if it’s your fault”.

Silence is an action in paremiological space, from N.D. Arutunova’s point of view the verb keep silence suggests the fulfilment of speech act (Jens, 2016).

4) Proverbs with component *грех / грешно + инфинитив* (1%), *sündig+sein / Substantiv + ist + Sünde* (0,1%) reveals religious-moral concept of any lingvoculture not every subject can be motivated to nonfulfillment of the action.

In orthodox the notion sin is connected with conscious and unconscious deviation from God’s divine, but we should take into consideration that proverbs with such component express prohibition from the ethical point of view: *Грех смеяться над чужим горем* (Wander & Barth, 1979)– “It’s a sin to laugh at someone else’s grief”; *Грешно дать умереть младенцу в люльке: все одно, что на виселице* (Dal, 2005) – “It’s a great sin to let a child die”; *Всякая неправда грех* (Dal, 2005) – “Every untruth is a sin”; *Kampf ist Sünde* (Wander & Barth, 1979)– “Fighting sin”; *Wer sich der Sünde rühmt, sündigt doppelt* (Beyer & Beyer, 1987) – “He who boasts of sin is doubly sinful” and others.

5) Constructions *Imperativ 2.Person Plural + Negationswort* и *не + императив 2 л., ед. ч.* are met in Russian and German prohibitive proverbs, are similar, the frequency of use is low-less than 1 per cent in both languages. The sender of utterance to several addresses is not typical for proverbs but is not absolute exception: *He спорьте о приданом, после прибавим* (Dal, 2005) – “Do not argue about the dowry, after we add”; *Кумитесь – кумитесь, да не подеритесь!* (Dal, 2005) – “Scoff but don’t fight”; *He прикажите голову рубить, прикажите речь говорить!* (Dal, 2005) – “Don’t hurry let give a speech and others”. German proverbs with such constructions, entering to the card index of research were used only with the verb *sich zanken* (“swear”): *Zankt euch nicht, gebt euch lieber Nasenstüber* (Wander & Barth, 1979)– “Don’t swear, better make a remark to each other”; *Zankt euch nicht, schlägt euch lieber und kriegt euch bei den Köpfen* (Wander & Barth, 1979)– “Don’t swear, better fight” and others.

6) Russian predicative construction *one must not + Infinitive corresponds with modal structure, used in German proverbs: man/es + dürfen + Negationswort + Infinitiv; Substantiv / Pronomen + dürfen + Negationswort + Infinitiv и verboten + sein: Man darf nicht alles sagen, was wahr ist* (Wander & Barth, 1979)– “Don’t say what you know, but know everything what you say”; *Wer mit Lust will essen, darf nicht kochen sehen* (Wander & Barth, 1979)– “Anyone who wants to eat with an appetite *can’t watch*”; *Das Hemd darf nicht wissen, wohin der Rock geht* (Wander & Barth, 1979)– “The shirt can’t know where the skirt went”; *Stehlen ist bei Henken verboten* (Wander & Barth, 1979)– “You are not allowed to steal by hanging”; *Fasten und feiern ist der Christenheit verboten* (Wander & Barth, 1979)– “Fasting and feasting in Christianity is not allowed” and so on.

It should be noted that for prohibitive semantics in these modal constructions verbs *sollen, müssen* can be used, which bring down the degree of categorical expression of prohibition in proverbs: *Der Drache soll nicht in die Höhe steigen* (Wander & Barth, 1979)– “The dragon *must not* stop in the sky”; *Man soll nicht aus der Schule schwatzen* (Simrock, 2003)– “Don’t give away secrets”; *Man muss den Bissen nicht größer machen als das Maul* (Simrock, 2003)– “You don’t need to take a piece bigger than your mouth”; *Das Auge muss nicht grösser sein als der Magen* (Wander & Barth, 1979)– “The eye should not be bigger than the stomach” and others. Modal constructions of such type are common phenomenon as well as Infinitive constructions in Russian language (Rogozhnikova, 2012). Taking into account that modal verbs of German are semantically full, polyfunctional that explains is spread. I.N. Rogoshnikova considers modal verbs of the German language as the main means of expression of deontic modality (Simrock, 2003), along with Kirillov & Starchenko (1998) implies modality, inducing to actions.

To prohibitive constructions of Russian proverbs without reference to mentioned prohibitive structures, containing in German paremiologic sayings, we refer: a) *не+инфинитив (В те сани не садиться, в которых не катиться!* (Anikin, 1988) – “In those sledges *do not sit down*, which do not roll”; *С богом не спорить!* (Mokienko et al., 2010)– “Don’t argue with God”; *Задумал бежать, так не лежать!* (Dal, 2005) – “I’m going to run, *not lie down*”; and others.); b) *не велит / не велят + инфинитив (И рад бы дать, да кабалить не велят* (Anikin, 1988) – “And I would be glad to give it, but *they don’t tell me to do it*”; *Дом невелик, да лежать не велит* (Anikin, 1988) – “The house is small, but *it doesn’t tell you to lie down*”; *Плакать не смею, тужить не велят* (Anikin, 1988) – “I don’t dare cry, *they don’t tell me to grieve*” and others.); c) *ничего + инфинитив (Не видав вечера, и хвалиться ничего* (Anikin, 1988) – “Not having seen the evening, and nothing to brag about”; *Ничего попусту в плешь колотить* (Anikin, 1988) – “There is no need to beat your bald head in vain”; *Ничего в ворота грохать, когда калитка не заперта* (Mokienko et al., 2010)– “Don’t Bang on the gate when it’s not locked” and others.). In these constructions prohibitive semantics is expressed by means of Infinitive with negation and predicative-Infinitive group. From a point of view, «complex and delicate variety of modality colors in infinitive sentences in Russian language», is achieved by Infinitive (Vinogradov, 1955).

To german prohibitive constructions, which don’t have Russian equivalents we refer: a) *sein + nicht + zu + Infinitiv* in the meaning don’t do anything»: *Mit dem Teufel ist nicht zu spielen* (Wander & Barth, 1979)– “Don’t play with the devil”; *Mit Gott und Geld ist nicht zu scherzen* (Wander & Barth, 1979)– “Don’t mess with God and money”; *Schönem Wetter und Fürstenlächeln ist nicht zu trauen* (Wander & Barth, 1979)– “Good weather and the smile of princes is not to be trusted” and others.); b) *kein + Substantiv* – such structure is met in our card index in unique variant: *Kein Tanz, der Teufel hat dabei den Schwanz* (Simrock, 2003: 511)– “No dancing, or the devil will follow”.

4. Conclusion

So among revealed prohibitive constructions, met in Russian and German proverbs, we discover 6 semantic coincidences between such constructions: 1) *не + императив 2 л., ед. ч. and Imperativ 2. Person Singular + Negationswort*; 2) structures *man + Verb 3. Person Singular + Negationswort* and *не + 3л. мн.ч.*; 3) Imperative forms of the verbs “(ver)schweigen” / “молчать” in Russian and German proverbs; 4) *грех / грешно + инфинитив* and *sündig + sein / Substantiv + ist + Sünde*; 5) *не + императив 2 л., мн. ч. and Imperativ 2. Person Plural + Negationswort*; 6) *нельзя + инфинитив* and a number of German structures *man/es + dürfen + Negationswort + Infinitiv; Substantiv / Pronomen + dürfen + Negationswort + Infinitiv; verboten + sein*. To non-equivalent constructions in comparative languages we refer: *не + инфинитив; не велит / не велят + инфинитив; ничего + инфинитив; man/es+sollen / müssen + Negationswort*

+ *Infinitiv; Substantiv / Pronomen + sollen / müssen + Negationswort + Infinitiv; sein + nicht + zu + Infinitiv; kein + Substantiv.*

From our point of view, structural-semantic similarities of constructions are determined by polyfunctionality and spread of structural components in comparative languages, also revealed lacunarity on the base of the absence of structural equivalents in Russian and German languages are connected with differences in manifestations of national character-specific features in the frame of paremiologic space of considering lingvolcultures. The individuals' communicative behaviour is determined by their belonging to a certain socio-cultural and linguistic community (Abuzyarova, Takhtarova, & Kuzmina, 2019).

4.1. Contribution

According to the author, the absence of any systemic parallels in the languages compared is due to differences in the characteristics of the national mentality in the paremiological space of the Russian and German languages.

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