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Research article

Structural and Semantic Analysis of English and Russian Proverbs about Marriage as a Source of Expression of Cultural and National Identity

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Abstract. The article is devoted to the comparative structural and semantic analysis of proverbs of the English and Russian languages with the meaning “marriage”. The novelty and relevance of the study consists in the fact that the proverbs that go to the heart of the current problems of marriage relations were first analyzed with the use of comparative approach in the context of structural and semantic analysis. In the course of the analysis, on the material of the proverbs of these languages, the main meanings of the proverbs were identified and systematized. The proverbs reveal the view on the value of marriage, the view on the predestination of marriage, the roles of husband and wife, controversial aspects of marital relations, as well as the question of the unity and strength of the family. An important part of the article is the study of male and female views on the problem of marriage, family life and the choice of a life partner. In English proverbs, a critical attitude towards marriage and the mention of the advantages of a bachelor life can be found more often. In Russian proverbs, marriage is generally viewed more positively but almost half of the proverbs that reveal the hardships of life in marriage are proverbs that convey a woman’s view of marriage. The article reveals lexical components, syntactic structures, artistic techniques and figurative means pertain to the proverbs of both linguistic and cultural ethnic groups. The presence of unique and distinctive proverbs in each language reflects the peculiarities of the historical and cultural experience of the two peoples, but the proverbs of both languages also have many common features. This is explained both by the community of human nature and knowledge, and by borrowing from common sources. Both Russian and English proverbs are characterized by using methods of comparison, contraposition, allegory, the use of personifying metaphors, lexical antonymy, the use of zoonyms, proper nouns and somatisms. In Russian, the emotional and expressive component is higher due to the use of diminutive suffixes, vernacular and vulgar words, they represent more widely archaisms and vocabulary associated with the realities of peasant life. Most Russian proverbs are composed according to the laws of the folklore genre and have a compositional completeness due to their rhythmic and phonetic design. Most of the English proverbs contain sayings, teachings, and use more abstract and neutral vocabulary, although there are also bright and original proverbs among them. The author reveals interaction of the figurative means and

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the conceptual component of proverbs and concludes that the linguistic means and figurative motivation of proverbs are related to the peculiarities of the national-cultural thinking of the both peoples.

Key words: structural and semantic analysis, comparative analysis; English proverbs; Russian proverbs; lexical components; syntactic structures; figurative means; national and cultural identity

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Introduction

The modern era combines the trends of globalization and the interaction of cultures, so the ever-increasing scientific interest in linguistic phenomena, reflecting the cultural specifics of peoples, and provides the relevance of choosing proverbial material as an object of research. “Many proverbs characterize the basic values of the national culture, combining them within the laconic text, and explain the essence of one phenomenon by comparing it with another” [1. P. 312]. The cultural significance of proverbs, thus, stimulates interest in intercultural comparison [2. P. 7], which provides the richest material for the researchers; this material, on the one hand, reflects the culturally specific heritage of the peoples under study, on the other hand, it allows to track linguistic patterns that more fully reveal social phenomena affected by them.

In our time the issues of the family are more relevant than ever: the issues of the patriarchal and nuclear family attract the attention of representatives of various sciences, highlighting and studying certain aspects of its functioning and development [3. P. 159], and the issues of marital relations is certainly one of the key ones among them. B. Kochman-Haladyj rightly notes that “the category of folklore can be regarded as an significant indicator ... of human stereotypes, sex relations and the overall perception of current gender issues” [4. P. 319]. Proverbs maintain their meaning and linguistic form and at the same time they convey the knowledge and experience accumulated by previous generations as fully as possible. “... In the language, precisely those figurative expressions that are associated with cultural and national standards, stereotypes, mythologemes, etc. are fixed and phraseologized, which, when used in speech, reproduce the

mentality peculiar to the particular linguocultural community” [5. P. 233]. The relevance of our study, therefore, is provided both by the importance of the topic of marriage, the role of the wife and husband in creating a family, which we are investigating, and by the relevance of the approach to the study of these problems with the use of proverbial material in the context of comparative analysis.

Literature review and methods of research

A review of current research reveals several focus areas. The first direction implements the analysis of the concepts “MARRIAGE”, “HUSBAND” and “WIFE” both in the paremias of one language [6], and on the material of comparing the proverbs of two or more languages with an emphasis on implementation in the paremiological world-images [7—12], in the context of paremiological portraiture [13] and the study of the linguo-semiotic characteristics of concepts [14; 15]. The second direction of research reflects a mirror approach to the problem: the analysis of family traditions and marriage relations in the linguistic world-image based on the analysis of proverbs about marriage [16; 17]. The works that aim to study the national mentality using the example of the proverbs of the language under study stands apart, for example, the article by V.A. Detkova, which focuses on gender relations in the family and the way they are reflected in proverbs [18].

The peculiarity of our research consists in identifying of phraseological meaning, figurative means, lexical components, means of expressive syntax, as well as emotionally coloured lexical means and sound organization in the proverbs of the English and Russian languages of this thematic group. The conducted analysis in combination with the comparative approach creates a more aggregate picture of the national and cultural originality of proverbs due to their comparisons and contrasts. In accordance to our goal we used the method of comparative phraseology, descriptive method, functional-stylistic analysis, as well as elements of the method of hermeneutic interpretation in combination with the principles of cognitive analysis. The object of the research was the English and Russian proverbs about marriage. Dictionaries of English and Russian proverbs [19—23] served as the source of empirical material; the selection was carried out by the method of continuous sampling.

Comparative structural and semantic analysis of thematic groups of English and Russian proverbs about “marriage”

The analysis of the proverbial field under study made it possible to separate out several groups in accordance with the values they represent. The

first group is formed by the proverbs that talk about the importance of marriage and its meaning in human life: *A man without a wife is but half a man; Man without a woman is like a ship without a sail; Wives must be had, be they good or bad; A good wife and health is a man's best wealth.* Russian proverbs corresponding to them are: *Не женат — не человек* (Not married — not a man); *Холостой — полчеловека* (Single is half a person); *Что гусь без воды, то мужик без жены* (A man without a wife is like a goose without water.); *Без мужа, что без головы, без жены, что без ума* (Without a husband is like without a head, without a wife is like mindless); *Муж без жены, что конь без узды* (A husband without a wife is like a horse without a bridle); *Лучше жениться, чем волочиться* (Better to marry than to gallivant); *Человек семьёю крепок* (A man with a family is strong); *Добрая жена да жирные щи — другого добра не ищи* (A kind wife and fat cabbage soup — don't look for any other good); *Не надобен и клад, коли у мужа с женой лад* (There is no need for a treasure, if a husband and wife are in harmony); *Здоровье — первое богатство, а второе — супружество* (Health is the first wealth, and the second is marriage). With some similarity of meanings, the proverbs of this group are distinguished by a great variety in their linguistic expression, from full equivalents to unique proverbs with a special figurative structure, lexical content and expressive techniques. The proverbs, in which the essence of marriage is explained by comparing with other more specific and understandable phenomena of the surrounding life, are of a particular interest. So, in the English proverb “a husband without a wife” is compared with “a ship without a sail”, and in a Russian proverb he is compared with “a horse without a bridle” and with “a goose without water”. As it can be seen, in the English proverb wife and health are valued “above wealth”, and in the Russian proverb “a good wife and fat cabbage soup” are valued above good, and “harmony in the family” is valued above treasure. As you can see, in Russian proverbs, a more specific vocabulary is used, which echoes the peasant way of life. This indicates a more substantive and concrete thinking of Russian people. In several Russian proverbs, zoonyms and somatisms are used to express the state of an unmarried man, which gives them emphasis and expression. Sound design and rhyming lines also play an important role in Russian proverbs. In these proverbs the national and cultural specificity of the representative of the folk environment is felt. It is important to mention that among Russian proverbs there are very few gender-neutral ones, since only in the last Russian proverb we find the word “супружество” (matrimony), which is close in meaning to the English word “marriage”. In Russian, there is a gender difference in the words “женитьба”

(marriage of a man) and “замужество” (marriage of a woman) and more often marriage is viewed from the perspective of a man, less often from the perspective of a woman.

An important subgroup is formed by the proverbs of both languages, reflecting ambivalent or negative attitudes towards marriage. Here are some examples of English proverbs: *The married man has many cares, the unmarried one many more; He who marries does well but he who marries not, better; Marriage makes or mars a man; A young man married is a young man marred; Why buy a cow when milk is so cheap?; Needles and pins, needles and pins, when a man marries, his trouble begins; If you would be happy for a week take a wife; if you would be happy for a month kill a pig; but if you would be happy all your life plant a garden.* In this proverb, marriage is not valued in negative way, but in a number of comparisons it appears as the most ephemeral source of satisfaction and happiness. Through analyzing the linguistic means of the English proverbs of this group we see that the first four English proverbs contain sayings and teachings in a generalized form, they are maxims. They use neutral lexical components and lack expression. Unique proverb *Why buy a cow when milk is so cheap?* is structured in the form of a rhetorical question and expresses an argument against marriage; it is very expressive due to the image of an animal (a cow) which is used as an allegory. The following English proverb with rhyming words is also very expressive, its semantic kernel is expressive repetitions of “needles and pins” (needles and pins convey something stabbing), which in the thinking of the British are associated with troubles related to family life. The last two proverbs use the irony inherent in the mentality of the Englishman. Among Russian proverbs, there are also those expressing an ambiguous and negative attitude towards marriage, both from a male and female point of view. Some examples of a negative attitude towards marriage on the part of a man: *Женился — на век заложился* (Married — pawn for a century); *Женишься раз, а плачешься век* (You get married once, and you cry forever); *Один женился — свет увидал, другой женился — с головой пропал* (One got married — he saw the light, the other got married — got lost up to the hilt). The first Russian proverb is a complex asyndetic sentence of a conditional type. It uses the method of hyperbolization “на век заложился” (pawn for a century), uses a verb with a colloquially reduced stylistic connotation “заложился” (pawn) with the meaning “gave everything in pledge.” The second Russian proverb is a generalized personal sentence, its expressiveness is given by contextual antonymy, which is enhanced by syntactic parallelism, the opposition of words expressing a single thoughtless

action and a long payback for it: “once” and “forever”. The last Russian proverb also speaks about the ambiguity of marriage, but it actualizes a slightly different meaning: “marriage is evaluated differently by different people.” It is based on the opposition based on contextual antonymy: “One saw the light — one was lost up to the hilt.” An example of a woman’s negative attitude toward marriage: *В девках сижено — плакано, замуж хо-жено — выто* (In girls — weeped, married — wailed); *В девках приторно, замужем натужно, а во вдовьей чреде, что по горло в воде* (The girls are cloying, the married are strained, and the widows are up to their throats in water); *Умный женится, а дура замуж идет* (A clever (man) gets married, but a foolish (girl) is getting married). From the point of view of linguistic means of expressiveness in the first two Russian proverbs we observe grammatical, syntactic and rhythmic parallelism, ellipsis, which gives them laconicism, as well as opposition, archaic forms of participles, words with pejorative (negative) colouration: “плакано” (weeped), “выто” (wailed), “натужно” (strained). The third proverb is based on an antithesis, a lexical antonymy: “clever — foolish”. All these linguistic means of expressiveness emphasize the meaning of “the hardness of the fate of a woman in marriage.” These proverbs clearly express the mentality of a married peasant woman. An analysis of the proverbs above shows that English proverbs are characterized by a more critical attitude towards marriage, in the English language there are more proverbs that simultaneously assert both the pros and cons of marriage. Despite the fact that the English word “marriage” is gender neutral, unlike the Russian words “женильба” (marriage of a man) and “замужество” (marriage of a woman), English proverbs addressed to the advantages and disadvantages of marriage basically reflect the interests of a man, while among Russian proverbs we find proverbs that talk about the difficulties of marriage for a woman. The interaction between language and power (influence) is widely studied in sociolinguistic discourse, especially in the context of language research in order to establish the influence of women in culture [24. P. 59]. It is not only the sort of the mention that matters, but also the very fact of taking the interests of the woman into account. Thus, we can conclude that the importance of women and their choice in the Russian family is higher than in the English one.

A small subgroup associated with the previous one is formed by proverbs that talk about the worries and difficulties that arise when getting married. In Russian proverbs we see the point of view of a man: *Жениться — не воды напиться* (To marry is not to drink water); *Жениться, так не лениться*

(Married then don't be lazy); *Жениться — переродиться* (To marry is to get reborn). The above mentioned proverbs are very laconic and capacious in their content due to the use of expressive infinitive sentences and syntactic parallelism. The first proverb contains the likeness “to marry — not to drink water”. In Russian proverbs, the emphasis is placed on the fact that marriage makes a man change, work harder. A unique English proverb with an English sense of humor tells that marriage is a serious work: *There goes more to marriage than four bare legs in a bed*. The humorous effect of this proverb arises from an unexpected concretizing comparison with the use of somatisms: “four bare legs”.

A significant group is made up of proverbs that talk about the role of the material component of marriage. Of interest is an English proverb that expresses the meaning “before you get married, you need to achieve prosperity and financial position”: *First thrive and then wife*. The following Russian proverbs correspond to it: *Сначала капитал наживи, а уж потом жену ищи* (First, make money, and only then look for a wife) and *Сперва оперись, а потом и ввысь* (First fledge, and then go upward). English and Russian proverbs about the need for wealth to provide for a family are very close in meaning, syntactic structure and lexical content. They contain edification in the form of incentive sentences. The English proverb is more expressive due to the brevity and incompleteness of the second part of the sentence. This similarity testifies to the universality of human experience and way of thinking and expresses common human values. The second Russian proverb is more expressive and unique due to the allegory, where a man-groom is likened to a bird, which must first “fledge” and then fly “upward.” This proverb speaks allegorically about the need for material wealth and maturity to build a family. Another English proverb says that a good man is more important than money: *Rather a man without money than money without a man*, but the arising semantic contradiction is reconciled by another proverb: *Never marry for money but marry where money is*. Both English and Russian proverbs claim that a lack of money threatens the well-being of a family life, but this problem is even more acute in several Scottish proverbs: *God, give me a rich husband, than he be an ass; He who marries for love without money, hath merry nights and sorry days; Marry a beggar, and get a louse for your tocher* [25. P. 168]. Among the Russian proverbs, the following are the closest in meaning: *Муж любит жену богатую, а тещу тороватую* (The husband likes when his wife is rich, and the mother-in-law is generous); *Будь жена хоть коза, лишь бы золотые рога* (Let a wife be even a goat, if only with

golden horns). As for the linguistic design of Scottish proverbs, we see that the first proverb is a direct appeal to God with a request to give a rich husband at any cost, even if he is an “ass”. It uses the harsh, derogatory word “ass”. The second proverb is a stylistically neutral judgment. Its expressiveness is based on the antithesis of “merry nights” and “sorry days”. The third proverb has a rough connotation due to its lexical content “get a louse for your tocher”. The use of emotionally expressive and slightly negative zoonyms “ass”, “louse” gives them a folk colloquial and a bit rude colouration and testifies to their peasant origin, and from the point of view of their meaning, to the practicality of both women and men in choosing rich brides and suitors. Let’s move on to the analysis of Russian proverbs. As we can see, the first Russian proverb is a dictum, which is constructed using syntactic and grammatical parallelism with the rhyming words “богатую” — “тороватую” (in the archaic meaning “generous”), which also gives it a colloquial colour. The second Russian proverb also has a slightly negative stylistic colouring due to the comparison of a rich bride with “a goat that has golden horns”. The zoonym “goat”, as well as the incompleteness of the second part of the sentence, give it an expression and colloquial colouring. In the considered group of proverbs there is a unique Russian proverb, that stands apart, which tells about the purpose of marriage: *Для щей люди женятся, а для мяса (во щах) замуж выходят* (For cabbage soup people get married, and for meat (in cabbage soup) they get married). This proverb affirms the purely material goals of marriage. It is based on an allegorical metaphor, where cabbage soup is the comfort created by the wife, and meat in cabbage soup is the wealth provided by the husband [26. P. 232]. This proverb reflects the mentality of a representative of the peasant class, for whom it was much easier to survive with a family than alone.

An important subgroup is made up of proverbs that say that a wife’s wealth can lead to a husband’s loss of power and authority in the family: *He that marries for wealth sells his liberty; Who wives for a dower, resigns his own power; A great dowry is a bed full of brambles*. In Russian, following proverbs correspond to them: *Лучше на убогой жениться, чем с богатой браниться* (It is better to marry a poor woman than to scold a rich one); *Богатую взять — будет попрекать* (Take a rich wife — she will reproach); *Не с богатством жить — с человеком* (You are to live not with wealth but with a person); *Не бери приданое, бери милу девицу* (Do not take a dowry, take a dearest girl). The first two English proverbs are sayings and use stylistically neutral vocabulary. The third proverb is very figurative

due to the expressive comparison of a great dowry with a bed full of brambles. Russian proverbs of this group are sayings in a form of advice and do not contain a pronounced expression. They are various in linguistic expression and use colloquial syntactic constructions: infinitive sentences, asyndeton, ellipsis, incentive sentences and comparisons. In Russian proverbs, we see the archaic vocabulary “убогая” in the meaning of “poor”, “браниться” in the meaning of “quarrel, swear”, grammatical archaism “милу девицу” (dearest girl) — all these linguistic means give proverbs a colloquial tone.

A distinct group is made up of proverbs that speak of the predetermination of a spouse and of fate when choosing a life partner: *Marriages are made in heaven; Every Jack has his Jill; Hanging and wiving go by destiny; Marriage is destiny; Marriage is a lottery*. Following Russian proverbs correspond to them: *Браки заключаются на небесах* (Marriages are made in heaven); *Смерть да жена богом сужена* (Death and the wife are God-destined); *Всякая невеста для своего жениха родится* (Every bride will be born to her groom); *Первая жена от бога, вторая от человека, третья от черта* (The first wife is from God, the second is from man, the third is from the devil). Upon comparison, we see that the first Russian proverb is the exact equivalent of the English one, since they both have a common source — a biblical statement. The means of expressiveness in the second English proverb is the use of proper names, which concretize the concepts of “husband” and “wife”. In two Russian proverbs God is mentioned, which testifies to the piety and religiosity of the Russian person [27. P. 5], while English proverbs often tell about fate and chance.

The next group is represented by proverbs that talk about the need for a serious, balanced attitude towards marriage. The following English proverbs urge you to take your time when choosing a spouse: *Married in haste end repent in leisure; Quick choice — long repentance; Hasty love is soon hot and soon cold*. Russian proverbs correspond to these proverbs: *Женился на скорую руку, да на долгую муку* (One got married in haste, but for a long suffering); *Кто на борзom коне жениться поскочет, тот скоро поплачет* (He who gallops on a gallant steed to get married will soon cry); *Не торопись жениться, чтобы потом на себя не сердиться* (Do not rush to get married, so as not to be angry with yourself later). We see that the proverbs of this semantic group in the English language are almost completely gender-neutral, while their Russian counterparts reveal a masculine view of the problem. As for the linguistic design of English proverbs, it is clear that two of them contain sayings with a deep and

capacious meaning, they use stylistically neutral vocabulary. The third English proverb is very expressive due to the antithesis, the use of lexical antonyms: “hot — cold”. Russian proverbs of this group are more expressive due to the use of the antithesis technique, lexical antonymy — “haste — long suffering”, the use of the zoonym — “gallant steed”, as well as due to their sound and intonation design and rhyme. The third Russian proverb is less expressive. It contains a call to action in the form of an incentive sentence with rhyming endings “жениться — сердиться” (to marry — to be angry).

A large subgroup is made up of the proverbs of the English and Russian languages, which talk about how to choose a spouse, for example: *Choose your wife on Saturday not on Sunday*, which corresponds to the Russian analogue: *Выбирай жену не в хороводе, а в огороде* (Choose your wife not in a round dance, but in the garden). *Take a vine of good soil and a wife of a good mother*, which corresponds to the Russian proverb: *Невесту по теще выбирай* (Choose a bride by your future mother-in-law). Following English proverbs belong to the same subgroup: *Choose not a wife by the eye only; Choose a wife by your ear, rather by your eye* and the corresponding Russian proverbs: *Не ищи красоты, ищи доброты* (Do not look for beauty, look for kindness); *Жену выбирай не глазами, а ушами* (Choose your wife not with your eyes, but with your ears); *Шей шубу теплее, а жену выбирай милее* (Sew your fur coat to be warmer, and choose your wife to be kinder). English and Russian proverbs, which say that you need to choose a wife according to “good mother” and “по теще” (mother-in-law), are close in phraseological meaning, figurative motivation and syntactic structure, contain advice and call to action in the form of incentive sentences. This similarity is provided by the commonality of figurative-associative connections in the minds of both the English and the Russian peoples. The English proverb is a more extended two-part sentence in which the choice of a bride is compared to choosing a wine made from grapes grown in good soil. This gives her a lot of expression. In this group of proverbs, there are two more almost equivalent proverbs, which speak of the choice of a wife “not with the eyes, but with the ears.” Their figurative meaning is based on the opposition of somatisms: “eyes — ears”. With the help of these somatisms the proverbs convey the idea that the beauty of the bride is less important than her moral virtues, since one can judge by the conversation about intelligence, kindness and other inner virtues. In terms of syntactic structure these proverbs are represented by incentive sentences that contain the message of the ancestors on how to choose a wife. The closeness of English

and Russian proverbs is provided by the universality of human experience. In the last of the considered Russian proverbs, the choice of a wife is equated to sewing a fur coat “warmer” — this proverb is a linguocultural metaphor, since in Russia with its cold climate a warm fur coat was highly valued. It should be noted that in the proverbs of this subgroup, mainly the point of view of a man is expressed, which corresponds to the traditional view of marriage, when it is the man, as the future head of the family and the owner of the house, who chooses his wife, and not vice versa. However, there are proverbs that illuminate the feminine perspective on choosing a life partner: *Better be an old man’s darling, than a young man’s slave* and *Choose your man as you choose your shoes — for comfort and long wear* — these English proverbs represent a pragmatic female view of the choice of a life partner. The first proverb is a judgment by meaning, and a comparative form of speech in terms of its syntactic structure. It is based on the lexical and contextual antonymy: “old man — young man” and “darling — slave”, which makes it quite expressive. In the second proverb, choosing a husband is compared to choosing comfortable and durable shoes; this proverb testifies to the pragmatism of the English and also contains a linguocultural connotation. The corresponding Russian proverbs show an example of the traditional submissive behavior of a girl: *Не вздыхай глубоко, не отдадим далеко* (Don’t take a deep breath, we won’t give you far away); *Не тужила, не плакала — пошла Марфа за Якова* (Martha did not grieve, did not cry but married Yakov). The first Russian proverb contains parental instruction that does not allow objections, since in Russia the tradition told parents to choose a groom for their daughters themselves. This proverb consists of two motivating sentences with rhyming adverbs “глубоко — далеко” (deep — far). The second Russian proverb uses proper names as expressive means, which reinforce the concretization of the proverb, as well as rhyming endings. It contains the archaism “тужить” in the meaning of “grieve”, which has a folk-poetic hue. This proverb expresses uncomplaining obedience to parental will. An example of a girl’s rebellious behavior is shown by the Russian proverb *От бела света отстану, а старого любить не стану* (I would leave the world behind, but I would not love the old), which contains a poetic expression “от бела света” (the world) with an archaic short form of the adjective in the meaning of definition. It uses the technique of hyperbolization, and also plays on similar-sounding words “отстану — не стану” (will leave — will not do). In contrast to the English proverb, which expresses a more pragmatic approach: “let the husband be old, but he must love me”, the Russian proverb expresses a decisive disregard for an old husband.

The traditional view of the importance of choosing a partner, as well as maintaining good relationships after marriage, is reflected in the following English proverb: *Keep your eyes wide open before marriage, half shut afterwards* and the corresponding Russian proverb: *Гляди в очи до брачной ночи, а после прищуривай* (Keep your eyes open before the wedding night, and then close your eyes partly). Analyzing these proverbs, we see that they are also very close both in phraseological meaning and in figurative motivation, however, they have small lexical discrepancies: “keep your eyes wide open” in the English proverb and “гляди в очи до брачной ночи” (keep your eyes open before the wedding night) in Russian one. The second parts of these proverbs contain almost identical lexical components. The English proverb contains a more generalized word “marriage”, and in Russian we meet the same word in a more specific meaning “wedding night”. It also uses the lexical archaism “очи” (eyes). The use of the alliteration and of the rhyme “очи — ночи” (eyes — night) strengthens the expressiveness of the Russian proverb. These proverbs simultaneously postulate both the need to carefully choose a spouse, sensibly assessing all possible shortcomings and weighing all the pros and cons, and the need to show leniency to spouses after marriage.

The next large group is formed by the proverbs that talk about the role of wives and husbands in the family, about their qualities, both desirable and undesirable. First of all, let’s examine the proverbs that talk about the importance of the role of the wife: *He that has a wife has a master; The wife is the key of the house; He that will thrive must first ask his wife; A good wife makes a good husband; У хорошей жены и муж молодец* (A good wife has a good husband); *Муж без жены пуще малых деток сирота* (A husband without a wife is more an orphan than small children); *Муж — голова, шея — жена, куда шея, туда и голова* (The husband is the head, the neck is the wife, where the neck goes, there the head goes); *Без мужа голова не покрыта, без жены дом не крыт* (Without a husband the head is not covered, without a wife the house is not covered); *С доброй женой горе — полгоря, а радость — вдвойне* (With a good wife, sorrow is half sorrow, and joy is double); *Добрую жену взять — ни скуки, ни горя не знать* (To take a good wife is not to know either boredom or grief); *Женою доброю муж честен бывает* (A good wife has an honest husband); *Умная жена мужа поднимает, а глупая опускает* (A clever wife raises her husband, and a stupid one lowers). The English proverbs of this group have the form of teachings and contain neutral vocabulary. The most expressive English proverb is the one in which the semantic kernel consists of the metaphor “wife is the key to everything”, it speaks of the significant role of

women in the family. The figurative structure of the very expressive Russian proverb is the opposition of somatisms: “муж — голова, жена — шея” (husband is head, wife is neck). This proverb speaks of the important role of the wife (“neck”) as a support for the husband (“head”). There is an interesting Russian proverb, which has socially significant lexical components: “Without a husband, the head is not covered, without a wife, the house is not covered”, which reflects the customs of the Russian people — a married woman had to wear a scarf on her head. This proverb performs a sociocultural function and also speaks of the important role of women in organizing family life. The Russian proverb “A husband without a wife is more an orphan than small children” contains evaluative vocabulary with the diminutive suffix “детки” (children), archaism “пуще” (more), it expresses emotions. Russian proverbs of this group are various in used figurative means, they contain antonymy, syntactic parallelism, rhythmic organization. All these means bring them closer to oral folk art — folklore.

The following English proverbs tell about the importance of the husband’s role: *If the husband be not at home, there is nobody; A good Jack makes good Jill; У хорошего мужа и жена хороша* (A good husband has a good wife); *Без мужа жена всегда сирота* (Without a husband, a wife is always an orphan); *Птица крыльями сильна, жена мужем красна* (The bird is strong with its wings, the wife is beautiful by her husband); *Муженек хоть всего с кулачок, да за мужниной головой не сижу сиротой* (Though my hubby is of the fist size, but behind my husband I don’t sit as an orphan). In this group, the most interesting is the English proverb, which uses proper names as expressive means to enhance clarity and concretization. It is interesting to note that in two Russian proverbs, both a husband without a wife (in the previous group of proverbs) and a wife without a husband (in the group under consideration) are compared to an “orphan”. This testifies to the mentality of the Russian person: a wife or husband is equally important for their spouses, and loss (widowhood) in both cases is equated with orphanhood. In this group, as in the previous one, there are also words with diminutive-affectionate suffixes “hubby”, “from a fist”, which give not only an emotional, but also humorous connotation. Very interesting in its phraseological image is the Russian proverb, built on the likeness of a married woman to a bird that is “strong with wings.” Attention is drawn to the fact that in the English language there are relatively more proverbs that speak of the important role of the wife in building a strong family than there are similar proverbs about the husband. This testifies to the peculiarities of

English cultural traditions, in contrast to Russians, where a man has always been the head of the family.

In English and Russian there are proverbs that tell directly about the distribution of responsibilities between a man and a woman in the house and about their complementarity to each other in all spheres of life: *Men make houses, women make homes; In the husband wisdom, in the wife gentleness; The husband sings, the wife accompanies* and the corresponding Russian proverbs: *Муж — голова, жена — душа* (Husband is a head, wife is a soul); *Муж — с огнем, жена — с водою* (The husband is with fire, the wife is with water); *Муж — полтину, а жена — холстину, все в одно место кладут, так и хорошо живут* (The husband — half a rouble, and the wife — canvas, they put everything in one place, and they live well); *Муж кует, жена дует, что-то будет* (The husband forges, the wife blows, something will happen). The meaning of proverbs about the distribution of responsibilities in the family between husbands and wives influences the choice of their language form. Three English proverbs represent sayings in the form of comparison: what a husband should be and what a wife should be. It is interesting to compare the English proverb “In the husband wisdom, in the wife gentleness”, which is similar in its figurative motivation to the Russian proverb “Муж — голова, жена — душа”. In the English proverb, the main virtue of a husband is “wisdom”, and that of a wife is “gentleness”. The Russian proverb emphasizes the husband’s primacy in the family and his mind, but the virtue of the wife is the “soul”. The word “soul” very succinctly expresses a purely Russian idea of the positive qualities of a person and has a religious connotation that connects positive qualities with his spiritual essence. From the others English proverbs it follows that the husband “builds houses”, and the wife “creates comfort”, the husband “sings”, and the wife “accompanies”. In Russian proverbs, this distribution of responsibilities is seen differently: the husband — “with fire”, the wife — “with water”, the husband brings money into the house (“half a rouble”), and the wife spins cloth (“canvas”), the husband “forges” (iron), and the wife “blows” (that is, helps). In Russian proverbs, the duties of a husband and wife are distributed in the course of work and are more specific. At the same time, in Russian proverbs, we see the incompleteness of syntactic constructions, ellipsis. The accent is shifted to nouns (with fire — with water, half a rouble — canvas).

The question of the leading role of one of the spouses in the family has another important aspect: these are proverbs that condemn the wife’s leadership in the house. Here are some examples: *It is a sad house where*

the hen crows louder than the cock; It is a sorry flock where the ewe bears the bell. Following Russian proverbs correspond to them: *Жена верховодит, так муж по соседям бродит* (The wife is in charge, so the husband wanders around the neighbors); *Не петь куры петухом, не владеть бабе мужиком* (Do not hen sing as a rooster, do not woman be a master of a man); *Кто жене волю дает, тот сам себя обкрадывает (бьет)* (Whoever gives rein to his wife is robbing (beats) himself). In this group of English proverbs, those that use the technique of allegory, the “Aesopian language”, are very expressive. They are based on a personifying metaphor that bestows human qualities upon animals. Such humanization of animals makes it possible to reveal the essence of a person closely related to the environment more vividly. So, in an English proverb, a hen that cries louder than a rooster means a loud, bossy wife, in another English proverb it speaks with condemnation of a sheep that bears a bell in a herd, meaning by this the unwanted leadership of the wife in the house. It is noteworthy that in the Russian proverb, a woman trying to gain the upper hand over her husband is likened to a hen that cannot (should not) become a rooster. In an English proverb, that house is bad where a woman “crows louder than the cock”.

A separate subgroup is made up of the proverbs that condemn evil and grumpy wives: *It is a good horse that never stumbles, and a good wife that never grumbles; Three things drive a man out of his house — smoke, rain and a scolding wife.* Here are Russian correspondences: *Лучше хлеб есть с водою, чем жить со злою женою* (It is better to eat bread with water than to live with an evil wife); *Лучше жить со змеею, чем со злою женою* (It is better to live with a snake than with an evil wife); *Червь дерево тлит, а злая жена дом изводит* (The worm spoils the tree, and the wicked wife plagues the house). In this group of proverbs, an English proverb is very expressive, in which a wife who never grumbles is like a horse that never stumbles. This proverb is based on the method of assimilation: in this way, a comparison with a horse brighter and more clearly demonstrates the qualities of a wife. The expressiveness of this proverb is enhanced by compositional completeness due to the rhyming verbs “stumbles — grumbles”. Russian proverbs are also expressive, they have the same syntactic structure, contain comparisons and are supported by rhyme, they say that “it is better to eat bread with water”, “it is better to live with a snake” than to live with an evil wife. The third Russian proverb is also expressive due to the use of the method of comparison: “the wife that plagues the house” is likened to “the worm that spoils the tree”.

Summing up the results of our study of proverbs about marriage, here are some English and Russian proverbs that talk about family unity and the importance of harmony in the family: *The family that prays together stays together; A house divided can not stand; Вся семья вместе, так и душа на месте* (When the whole family is together, the soul is in place); *Где семья дружна, не страшна беда* (Where the family is friendly, trouble is not terrible); *В семье разлад, так и дому не рад* (When there is discord in the family, one is not happy at home either); *Семейное согласие всего дороже* (Family consent is the most valuable); *Муж с женой что лошадь с телегой: везут, когда они исправны* (Husband and wife are like a horse with a cart: they drive when they are in good working order). Among the proverbs of this group there is an interesting English proverb, which says that the family is strengthened by common prayer. Its expressiveness is created by repeating the word “together”. Among the Russian proverbs of this group, there is a unique proverb, that is based on the method of assimilation: a husband and wife are compared to a working cart pulled by a horse. It observes the objective thinking of the Russian people and uses the vocabulary associated with peasant life. Russian proverbs are rhythmically organized. This series of proverbs that speak of unity is complemented by proverbs that talk about the close relationship between husband and wife in the family: *Put not your hand between the bark and the tree; Husband and wife live the same life; Man and wife make one fool* and the corresponding Russian proverb: *Муж и жена — одна сатана* (Husband and wife are one Satan). The analysis of these proverbs draws attention to the similarity of the phraseological image of the English and Russian proverbs: they say that the husband and wife are “one fool” in the English proverb and “one Satan” in the Russian one. They actualize the meaning that the husband and wife are also united by something negative. It is of particular interest to note an original English proverb, which says that it need not to interfere in a lasting union of a man and a woman. The phraseological meaning of this proverb is conveyed descriptively, through the phenomena of the surrounding nature, understandable and close to man: “do not put your hand between the tree and the bark.” This proverb is advice in the form of an incentive sentence.

Conclusion

Thus, our comparative structural and semantic analysis of English and Russian proverbs led to the following conclusions. From the point of view of meaning, both Russian and English proverbs convey traditional views on the family (about the need for marriage, about the predetermination of marriage

and a spouse, about the dominant role of the husband in the family, about the important role of the wife in the family, about the need for unity), but there are also important differences. In English proverbs, more often a contradictory attitude towards marriage can be found: close attention to the merits and demerits, mention of the advantages of a bachelor life, while in Russian proverbs, we mainly see a positive attitude towards marriage, but with a mention of the difficulties of life in marriage, in family. At the same time, English proverbs do not consider the female view of the disadvantages of marriage, while Russian proverbs about the severity of a woman's life in marriage make up almost half of all proverbs with a negative assessment of marriage. This, in our opinion, is the consequence of the reflection to a greater extent of the urban mentality in English proverbs and the peasant mentality in the Russian ones, since in the peasant life the role of women is especially great, because the woman not only was engaged in housework, but also participated actively in agricultural work. As for the linguistic features and figurative means of English and Russian proverbs, it is important to note that a significant role in them is assigned to such techniques as comparison and assimilation, allegory, the use of personifying metaphors, as well as antithesis and lexical antonymy. Speaking about lexical components, we can note that zoonyms, proper names are used as expressive means in the proverbs of both languages. In Russian proverbs, somatisms are more common, as well as more specific emotional and expressive vocabulary, words with diminutive suffixes, archaisms, vernacular, vocabulary associated with the conceptual sphere of peasant life. Most of the Russian proverbs are built according to the laws of the folklore genre, their compositional completeness is provided by their rhythmic and phonetic design. Most of the English proverbs contain sayings, teachings, use a more abstract and neutral vocabulary, although there are bright, unique and original proverbs among them. The analysis made it possible to show national-specific features of understanding the role and importance of marriage by both peoples, as well as to reveal the role of linguistic means that reflect the specifics of national-cultural thinking and mentality of both peoples.

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