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## Structural and Semantic Features and National Specificity of English and Russian Proverbs with the Meaning ‘Old’, ‘Young’

Tatiana G. Orlova  RUDN University, *Moscow, Russian Federation* orlova-tg@rudn.ru

**Abstract.** The problem of perception of age in the folk consciousness, which is studied on the basis of proverbs in the English and Russian languages with the meaning “old”, “young”, touches on issues that are relevant for all people — awareness of the laws of human existence, therefore, turning to proverb material in the context of this issue seems relevant and productive. The main objective of this study is to compare proverbs of the Russian and English languages on this topic in the aspect of structural and semantic analysis and to reveal important features of the national and cultural thinking of both peoples. The first aim of the study is to identify and systematize the basic meanings of proverbs, which reveal a view on the accomplishments of old people and the inherent advantages of an old age; a look at the problem of the state of the body and spirit, which depends not only on age, but also on the inner determination; the disadvantages of the old age and the problem of its inevitability; the virtues and traits of the youth, as well as its weaknesses; a look at typical traits that are traditionally associated with age, but do not depend on it, and, finally, the opposition of the old age and the youth both in the context of confrontation and in the context of cooperation and complementarity. The second aim is to determine the similarities and differences in the choice of linguistic and figurative means in proverbs of the two languages. Proverbs use linguistic devices such as comparison, conformation, opposition, metaphor, metonymy, personification, gradation, hyperbole, irony, allegory, paradox. Similar means of expressive syntax are distinguished: asyndeton, impersonal sentences, syntactic parallelism, ellipsis, compression, rhythmic and phonetic arrangement of proverbs, imperative and conditional sentences, and for the Russian language — infinitive and generalized-personal sentences. Proverbs use expressive vocabulary: zoonyms, somatisms, and Russian proverbs also more often use archaisms, vernacular, words with reduced stylistic colouring and words with diminutive suffixes (diminutives). The novelty of the study lies in the choice of research methodology based on the systematization of proverbial material into groups within the chosen topic and the comparative structural and semantic analysis of proverbs in each thematic group along with revealing similarities and differences in the choice of methods of expressiveness, figurative motivation, figurative means, as well as lexical components and syntactic structure in the proverbs of two languages. The analysis made it possible to show the

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nationally specific features of the understanding of the main characteristics of the old and young age by both peoples, as well as to identify the role of linguistic means that reflect the specifics of their mentality.

**Keywords:** comparative analysis, structural and semantic analysis; English proverbs, Russian proverbs, phraseological meaning, figurativeness and expression, expressive devices, lexical components, syntactic structures, national and cultural identity

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## Структурно-семантические особенности и национальная специфика английских и русских пословиц со значением ‘старый’, ‘молодой’

Т.Г. Орлова  

Российский университет дружбы народов, Москва, Российская Федерация

 orlova-tg@rudn.ru

**Аннотация.** Проблема восприятия возраста в народном сознании, исследуемая на материале пословиц английского и русского языков со значением «старый», «молодой», затрагивает проблематику, актуальную для всех людей — осознание закономерностей человеческого бытия, поэтому обращение к пословичному материалу в контексте данной проблематики представляется актуальным и продуктивным. Цель настоящего исследования состоит в сопоставлении пословиц русского и английского языков данной тематики в аспекте структурно-семантического анализа и выделения важных черт национально-культурного мышления обоих народов. Первая задача исследования — выявление и систематизация основных значений пословиц, в которых раскрывается взгляд на достоинства старых людей и преимущества, присущие старости; взгляд на проблему состояния тела и духа, которое зависит не только от возраста, но и от внутреннего настроения; недостатки старости и проблему неизбежности старости; достоинства и черты, свойственные молодости, а также недостатки молодости; взгляд на черты характера, которые традиционно связываются с возрастом, а от возраста не зависят, и, наконец, противопоставление старости и молодости как в контексте противостояния, так и в контексте сотрудничества и взаимодополнения. Вторая задача — определение сходств и различий в выборе языковых и образных средств в пословицах двух языков. Пословицы используют такие приёмы, как сопоставление, уподобление, противопоставление, сравнение, метафору, метонимию, олицетворение, градацию, гиперболу, иронию, аллегорию, парадокс. Выделяются сходные средства экспрессивного синтаксиса: бессоюзие, безличные предложения, синтаксический параллелизм, эллипсис, компрессия, ритмико-фонетическое оформление пословиц, побудительные, условные предложения, а для русского языка — инфинитивные и обобщённо-личные предложения. Используется выразительная лексика: зоонимы, соматизмы, а в русском языке чаще используются архаизмы, просторечие, слова со сниженной стилистической окраской и слова с уменьшительно-ласкательными суффиксами (диминутивы). Новизна исследования заключается в вы-

боре методологии исследования, основанной на систематизации пословичного материала по группам в рамках выбранной тематики и сравнительном структурно-семантическом анализе пословиц в каждой тематической группе с выделением сходства и отличия в выборе приёмов выразительности, образной мотивации, образных средств, а также лексического наполнения и синтаксической структуры в пословицах двух языков. Проведённый анализ позволил показать национально-специфические особенности понимания основных черт старого и молодого возраста обоими народами, а также выявить роль языковых средств, отражающих специфику их менталитета.

**Ключевые слова:** сопоставительный анализ, структурно-семантический анализ, английские пословицы, русские пословицы, фразеологическое значение, образность и экспрессия, приёмы выразительности, лексические компоненты, синтаксические структуры, национальная и культурная идентичность

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## Introduction

In the modern world the finding of the common ground for establishing intercultural dialogue becomes a primary objective of every specialist, and especially of those who work in the humanitarian field. As noted by M.L. Kovshova, “interdisciplinary analysis corresponds to the transition of humanitarian knowledge to a higher level of integrativeness” [1. P. 38]. The special relationship between language and culture is due to the fact that “language has a cultural function, <...> its vocabulary, texts are a kind of archive of culture, its memory” [2. P. 8]. This relationship between the language and the culture, postulated in modern linguistics, entails special attention to the language and to the study of phraseological units of the language, since “the phraseological composition of a language is a mirror in which a linguocultural community identifies its national self-awareness” [3. P. 9], and the global task of establishing intercultural dialogue encourages comparative research. Proverbs constitute the oldest layer of the phraseological system, consequently they attract special attention within the framework of the current task of establishing the dialogue of cultures, and this explains the choice of proverbs of the English and Russian languages as the object of our research. The reason for turning to the topic of age, to the concepts of OLD AGE and YOUTH in the proverbs of the two peoples is caused by the importance and, in a certain sense, timelessness of the problem of perception of age in the folk consciousness. The problem of age only partially coincides with the problem of “fathers and sons” (mutual understanding and interaction of generations), but is not limited by it. The issue of age perception touches on multiple issues

that are relevant for all people: the perception of the future and time in general in youth [4. P. 288], the existential content of OLD AGE [5. P. 14], the question of the inevitability of death that arises towards the end of life. And since proverbs, or paremias, according to the apt remark of N.F. Alefirenko, reflect those spheres of human existence that are “connected with a person’s awareness of his own essence, the laws of human existence” [6. P. 311], turning to proverbial material in the context of this problem seems relevant and productive.

### **Literature review, subject and method of research**

A review of modern research showed that there are several current areas of research. The most widely presented analysis of the concepts OLD AGE, YOUTH and AGE is based both on examples of proverbs of one language and in comparison of proverbs of two or more languages. So, A.A. Pintova explores the concepts old/young and старый/молодой in the English and Russian language pictures of the world [7]; semantic and cognitive study of the specifics of verbalization of age concepts in the Anglo-American linguistic picture of the world by Yu.S. Konovalova relies on the study of phraseological units, proverbs, aphorisms and cognitive metaphors, which are their verbal explicators [8. P. 3]. The study of age concepts based on Russian, English and Tatar proverbs is one of the elements of the study by D.A. Saleeva [9]. The concepts of YOUTH and OLD AGE in Russian and Italian languages are under consideration by K. Tocco [10]. Separately, the concept of OLD AGE is studied by Yu.S. Kudryashova based on the material of paremiological units in Russian and English linguistic societies [11]; the representation of the concept OLD AGE in the paremiological fund of the Russian language is studied by K.A. Listratkina [12]. An extended comparative analysis of phraseological units indicating a person’s age in English (including the American version) and Russian languages is presented in the study by Diaz Etsanet del Valle [13]. A comparative analysis of Romanian and English proverbs about the process of growing up (including proverbs about children, young and old people) is presented in her study by V. Konstantinova [14]. The axiological (value) dominant is the focus of another series of studies: for example, the axiology of age in Russian proverbs is studied by T.G. Bochina and Xian Qun [15], and the subject of research by D.N. Belova and T.M. Gurevich is the axiology of age in the Russian and Japanese pictures of the world based on proverbs and sayings [16]. Some studies aim to study the national mentality using the example of proverbs of the studied languages: for example, Kh.D. Edilkhanova conducted a study of interpersonal relations between older and younger generations in proverbs of three languages (Chechen, Russian and English), on the basis of which she concluded that the national mentality is reflected in the proverbs [17]. Interdisciplinary research stands out, combining psychological [18] or cultural [19] research into the problem of age, based on the study of proverbs.

The subject of our research is a comparative structural and semantic analysis of proverbs in the English and Russian languages with the meanings ‘old’ and ‘young’. The peculiarity of our research is to identify the phraseological meaning, figurative means, lexical components and means of expressive syntax in proverbs of the English and Russian languages of this thematic group. In combination with a comparative approach, the analysis creates a more comprehensive picture of the national and cultural uniqueness of proverbs. In accordance with our objectives, we used the method of comparative phraseology, descriptive method, functional-stylistic analysis with elements of the hermeneutic interpretation method. The source of empirical material was the dictionaries of English and Russian proverbs<sup>1</sup>, the selection was complex and proportional and was carried out using the unselected sampling method.

### Comparative structural and semantic analysis of proverbs

The analysis of the studied proverb material made it possible to identify several groups of proverbs in accordance with the meanings they express. The first group consists of proverbs that tell us about the virtues of old people, about the advantages that old age gives. Here are some examples: *Years know more than books; The best wine comes out of an old vessel; There’s many a good tune played on an old fiddle; If you wish a good advice ask the old man; An old poacher makes the best gamekeeper; An old ox makes a straight furrow; Old oxen has stiff horns; An old dog barks not in vain; An old cat knows when new milk flows; Old birds are not to be caught with chaff; An old fox is not easily snared; Old foxes want no tutors.* Here are the Russian equivalents: *Есть ещё порох в пороховницах* (There is still gunpowder in the flask); *Седина бобра не портит* (Gray hair does not spoil a beaver); *Кто много жил, тот много видел* (He who has lived a lot has seen a lot); *Старый конь борозды не портит* (An old horse does not spoil the furrow); *У старого козла крепкие рога* (The old goat has strong horns); *Заяц уж сед, навиделся бед* (The hare is already gray, he has seen enough troubles); *Старый пёс зря не лает* (The old dog doesn’t bark in vain); *Старый волк знает толк* (The old wolf knows a lot); *Старого воробья на мякине не проведёшь* (You can’t fool an old sparrow with chaff); *Старую лису хитростям не учить* (You can’t teach an old fox tricks).

We see that among the proverbs of this group, the English proverb *An old dog barks not in vain* and the Russian one *Старый пёс зря не лает* (An old dog does not

<sup>1</sup> Dal, V.I. (2009). *Proverbs of the Russian people*. Moscow: Russian language Media. (In Russ.); Zhukov, V.P. (1991). *Dictionary of Russian Proverbs and Sayings*. Moscow: Russian Language. (In Russ.); Margulis, A. & Holodnaya, A. (2000) *Russian-English Dictionary of Proverbs and Sayings*. North Carolina, London: McFarland and Company Publ. (In Russ.); Longman Contemporary English Dictionary (2001). Harlow Longman; Smith, W.G. (2008). *The Oxford dictionary of English proverbs*. Oxford.

bark in vain) are completely equivalent. The proverbs *Old birds are not to be caught with chaff* and *Старого воробья на мякине не проведёшь* (You can't fool an old sparrow with chaff) are close in syntactic structure and phraseological meaning, as well as proverbs *Old oxen has stiff horns* and *У старого козла крепкие рога* (The old goat has strong horns), which differ only in the lexical components *oxen* and *козёл* (goat). The proverbs *Old foxes want no tutors* and the *Старую лису хитростям не учить* (You can't teach an old fox tricks) are similar in phraseological meaning and the use of the zoonym "fox" but differ in the syntactic structure and lexical components (*want no tutors* — *хитростям не учить*). The English proverb *An old ox makes a straight furrow* and the Russian one *Старый конь борозды не портит* (An old horse does not spoil the furrow) are also close in phraseological meaning and have a common lexical component (*furrow*), but differ in syntactic structure. The first one is based on a positive statement: *makes a straight furrow*, the second is based on a negative statement: *борозды не портит* (does not spoil the furrow). When comparing, we see that special expressiveness of both English and Russian proverbs is given by laconicism and the use of zoonyms, as well as the use of allegory. An old man in English proverbs is compared to an old dog, old birds, an old ox, an old fox; In Russian proverbs, an elderly person is compared to a dog, an old sparrow, an old goat, an old fox, and a beaver. Other English proverbs are built on the metaphorical understanding of old age as an *old fiddle* or an *old vessel*, which can still produce a good melody or good wine. The English proverb *If you wish a good advice ask the old man* is built in the form of a conditional sentence and contains a lesson; it is almost devoid of imagery. The expressiveness of the other English proverb *Years know more than books* is due to the use of personifying metaphor and the technique of metonymy. The expressiveness of another English proverb *An old poacher makes the best gamekeeper* is created due to the paradox: *old poacher* is the *best gamekeeper*. The most original of the Russian proverbs is the frequently used proverb *Есть ещё порох в пороховницах* (There is still gunpowder in the flask), which implicitly expresses the meaning "an old man is still capable of something." It is a linguocultural metaphor, as it indicates the close connection of the Russian people with military affairs. The method of allegory is used in another proverb *Заяц уж сед, навидался бед* (The hare is already gray, he has seen enough troubles), in which old age is conveyed through the colour evaluative definition "gray-haired" (hare), and the lexical component *беда* (trouble) indicates that the Russian peasant had to experience a lot of difficulties and grief. This proverb also has a linguistic and cultural connotation. Russian proverbs use elements of folklore: allegory, rhyming lines and infinitive sentences that have a colloquial connotation (*Старую лису хитростям не учить*). In this group we observe a large number of proverbs that have a similar meaning and a similar internal form, which is explained by "the general social and historical conditions of life of peoples, the typological characteristics of the perception of the world inherent in a person regardless of his nationality" [20. P. 199].

Proverbs that tell us about the fact that the state of the body and spirit depends not only on age, but also on the inner mood of the person himself can be divided in a separate subgroup. Here are examples of English proverbs: *Age is in the mind, not in the calendar*; *A man is as old as he feels, and a woman as old as she looks*; as well as Russian correspondences: *И стар, да весел, и молод, да угрюм* (Old, but cheerful, young, but gloomy); *И молод, да хил, и стар, да дюж* (Young, but frail, old, but stout); *Стар дуб, да корень свеж* (The oak is old, but the root is fresh).

The imagery of the English proverb *Age is in the mind, not in the calendar* is given by the use of expressive opposition. Another English proverb *A man is as old as he feels, and a woman as old as she looks* gains expressiveness due to syntactic parallelism and apt observation. It stands out for its unusual attention to the problem of the difference in the perception of the age of men and women, while a man's age is actually determined by himself, his own sense of himself, while a woman's age is determined by an external judgment regarding her appearance. As for the two Russian proverbs *И стар, да весел, и молод, да угрюм* (Old, but cheerful, young, but gloomy) and *И молод, да хил, и стар, да дюж* (Young, but frail, old, but stout), telling about the vivacity of spirit and body of older people in comparison with young people, they have the same syntactic structures and are constructed at the reception of antithesis using antonyms (*old — young, весел — угрюм, хил — дюж*), morphological and syntactic parallelism, which gives them special expressiveness. Another Russian proverb *Стар дуб, да корень свеж* (The oak is old, but the root is fresh) uses the technique of opposition, contains lexical occasional antonymy of short forms of adjectives (*стар — свеж*) and is built on a hidden metaphor: comparing an elderly person with an oak tree, which, nevertheless, has a “fresh root.” Thus, a Russian person describes his state through some natural phenomena or objects that are close and understandable to him, in this case through trees.

The next large group consists of proverbs that tell us about the disadvantages of old age. Here are some examples: *Old age is a sickness of itself*; *There's no fool like an old fool*; *Old age doesn't protect from folly*; *Old men are twice children*; *When bees are old, they yield no honey*; *Old age and happiness seldom go together*; *An old dog bites sore*; *You cannot shift an old tree without it dying*; *You can't teach an old dog new tricks*. Let us also give Russian correspondences: *Старость не радость, не красные дни* (Old age is not joy, not fine days); *Старого учить, что мертвого лечить* (To teach the old is the same as to treat the dead); *Молод — перебесится, а стар — не переменится* (Young people will have fling, but old people will not change); *Погода к осени дождливей, а люди к старости болтливей* (The weather becomes rainier in autumn, and people become chattier in old age); *И на старуху бывает проруха* (An old woman also might be mistaken); *Старый что малый* (Old is like small); *Стар да упрям: ни людям, ни нам* (Old and stubborn: neither to people, nor to us); *На старого и немощи валяются* (The infirmities fall on the old); *Старый кобель ещё злей* (The old male is even angrier).

The proverbs *An old dog bites sore* and *Старый кобель ещё злей* (The old male is even angrier) are the closest in phraseological meaning and figurative motivation in this group. They are built on an allegory, an old man is likened to a dog, and in the Russian proverb the more concrete word *кобель* (male) is used, which gives the whole proverb a stylistically reduced sound. The proverbs *Old men are twice children* and *Старый что малый* (Old is like small) are also close in phraseological meaning and figurative motivation (old people are like children). Both of these proverbs are based on simile. The difference is that the English proverb uses the comparative phrase *twice* and the word *old man*, and the Russian proverb is more expressive due to the use of the substantivized adjective “старый” (old), rhyming with the word having a colloquial connotation “малый” (small), which gives the proverb a more colloquial tone overall. Among the English proverbs of this group we find proverbs that are aphorisms, generalizations, which are practically devoid of imagery and express a simple statement of fact, for example *Old age doesn't protect from folly*, and proverbs built on allegories. Thus, the proverb *When bees are old, they yield no honey* allegorically tells us about the uselessness of older people. And the proverbs *You cannot shift an old tree without it dying*, *You can't teach an old dog new tricks* speak of the inflexibility and inability of older people to learn. Additional expressiveness is given to these proverbs by the use of zoonyms (bees, dog) and stylistically reduced vocabulary (fool). The Russian proverb *Старого учить, что мертвого лечить* (To teach the old is the same as to treat the dead) is very expressive due to the paradox (to teach the old is to treat the dead), the use of substantivized adjectives (старый, мёртвый) and the rhyme. The proverb *Погода к осени дождливей, а люди к старости болтливей* (The weather becomes rainier in autumn, and people become chattier in old age) is of particular interest from the point of view of the choice of expressive means. The state of an elderly person is likened to the state of nature (rainy autumn) in it. This comparison reveals the close connection of Russian people with nature. It is built on syntactic parallelism and enriched with rhyming endings. The expressiveness of another Russian proverb *Молод — перебесится, а стар — не переменится* (Young people will have fling, but old people will not change) is due to the antithesis technique through the use of both lexical and contextual antonymy of the short forms of adjectives (*молод — стар*) and verbs (*перебесится — не переменится*), as well as the use of rhyme. The proverb *И на старуху бывает проруха* (An old woman also might be mistaken) contains an outdated, colloquially reduced vocabulary *проруха* (mistake, miss), its expressiveness is also enhanced by rhyming endings. The expressiveness and laconicism of the proverb *Стар да упрям: ни людям, ни нам* (Old and stubborn: neither to people, nor to us) is created due to short forms of adjectives (*стар, упрям*), ellipsis, asyndeton and rhythmicity of the phrase. The analysis shows that the English proverbs of this group tell not only about declining cognitive function in old age, but also about damage to character and health, as well as an inability to change. Russian proverbs also mention the stupidity of old people, bad character,

and poor health, but along with general problems, more concrete shortcomings are noted, such as talkativeness and stubbornness. This observation reveals the national and cultural originality of Russian proverbs of this group, which are characterized by a more specific observation of the psychological aspects of old age, along with judgments common to proverbs of both languages.

A separate group should include proverbs that tell us about the inevitability of old age, as well as the inevitable prospect of death. Here are examples of English proverbs: *You cannot have two forenoons in the same day*; *Old age is a malady of which one dies*; *They that live longest, must die at last*; *Young men may die but old men must die*. Here are the Russian equivalents: *Молодые по выбору мрут, а старые поголовно* (The young die by choice, and the old die without exception); *Стар будешь, а молод — никогда* (You will become old, but never young); *Старость — не младость, не видишь, как подкрадется* (Old age is not youth, you don't see how it creeps up); *От старости могила лечит* (The grave cures old age).

The first English proverb *You cannot have two forenoons in the same day* contains a subtle observation that says that youth is fleeting, but old age is inevitable. This meaning is conveyed through the states of nature familiar to humans: life is compared to a day, youth — to the forenoon (the time from sunrise to noon). The second proverb *Old age is a malady of which one dies* is an aphorism and lacks additional figurative means. Another English proverb *Young men may die but old men must die* is given special expressiveness by contrast due to the contextual antonymy of modal verbs (may die — must die), as well as syntactic parallelism. The expressiveness of Russian proverbs of this subgroup is also ensured mainly by methods of opposition. At the heart of the Russian proverb *Старость — не младость, не видишь, как подкрадется* (Old age is not youth, you don't see how it creeps up) is the personifying metaphor: old age *подкрадётся* (creeps up). It uses the phonetic archaism *младость* (youth). All this gives the proverb a folkloric sound. A special place among Russian proverbs of this subgroup is occupied by the proverb *От старости могила лечит* (The grave cures old age) thanks to the depth of judgment and irony achieved through the use of personification (*могила лечит*) and paradox.

The next group contains proverbs that tell us about the traits inherent in young age. Here are some examples: *Youth will have its fling*; *Youth likes to wander*; *The young will sow their wild oats*; *Youth never casts for peril*. Here are Russian correspondences: *Молодость горами шатает* (Youth shakes mountains); *Всякая молодость резвости полна* (Every youth is full of playfulness); *Молодая нога легка, молодая душа дерзка* (A young foot is light, a young soul is bold); *Молодо — зелено, погулять велено* (Youth is green, it's advisable to take a walk); *Молодое вино игриво* (Young wine is playful); *Молодо — зелено, да молодое — честно* (Youth is green, but young is honest); *Молодое сердце всегда ближе к правде* (A young heart is always closer to the truth).

From the above examples it is clear that most English proverbs are judgments that use Abstract words and neutral vocabulary and are devoid of imagery. Russian proverbs have greater expression due to the use of somatisms (нога — leg, сердце — heart), and they are laconic by the use of short forms of adjectives (полна — full, дерзка — bold, зелено — green, игриво — playful). Russian proverb *Молодая нога легка, молодая душа дерзка* (A young foot is light, a young soul is bold) is expressive through the use of short forms of adjectives, grammatical and syntactic parallelism, as well as the use of somatism *нога* (leg). Short forms of adjectives and rhyming endings also serve to enhance the expression, capacity and brevity of another Russian proverb: *Молодо — зелено, погулять велено* (Youth is green, it's advisable to take a walk). The figurative motivation of two Russian proverbs which begin with the words “молодо — зелено” (youth is green) is based on a comparison with unripe green fruits. A more expressive personifying metaphor underlies the Russian proverb *Молодое вино игриво* (Young wine is playful). Most of the proverbs of this group are devoted to the most characteristic features of young people, often with a negative connotation: in English proverbs it is fling, wild oats (recklessness), in Russian proverbs — boldness, playfulness, activity (*горамы шатает* — shakes mountains). Moreover, only among the Russian proverbs we see two, dedicated to purely positively assessed qualities attributed to youth — honesty and closeness to the truth: *Молодо — зелено, да молодое — честно* (Young is green, but young is honest); *Молодое сердце всегда ближе к правде* (A young heart is always closer to the truth). It is interesting to note that closeness to the truth here is due to the youth of heart.

The next group consists of proverbs that tell us about the shortcomings of youth, the main ones of which are stupidity and unreliability. Here are examples of English proverbs: *Youth has a small head; Youth is the brother of madness; Youth is easily deceived because it's quick to hope; Youth doesn't mind where it sets its foot; What would a young cat do but eat mice*. Here are the Russian equivalents: *Молодость доверчива, обмануть легко* (Youth is gullible, it is easy to deceive); *Молод виноград зелен, а млад ум не крепок* (Young grapes are green, and young minds are not strong); *Молоденький умок что весенний ледок* (The young mind is like spring ice); *Молодой журавль высоко взлетел, да низко сел* (The young crane flew high but sat low); *Молодой месяц не на всю ночь светит* (The new moon does not shine all night); *Молодой дружок, что весенний ледок* (Young friend is like spring ice); *Молодой красив, да душою крив* (The young man is handsome, but crooked in soul).

When comparing English and Russian proverbs, we see that among the main shortcomings of youth, English proverbs indicate stupidity, excessive gullibility, recklessness and carelessness. The laconic proverb *Youth has a small head* contains an expressive metaphor based on somatism (small head — i.e. stupidity). The proverb *Youth is the brother of madness* is also a judgment devoid of imagery, although it is based on a dead personifying metaphor. The following three English

proverbs, aphoristic in form, have different meanings. The proverb *Youth is easily deceived because it's quick to hope* has a similar meaning to the Russian proverb *Молодость доверчива, обмануть легко* (Youth is gullible, it is easy to deceive). However the second part of the English proverb reveals and explains the first part (the reason for the gullibility of youth is that it is quick to hope), while the second part of the Russian proverb complements the first part and gives consequences (youth is gullible, and that is why it is easy to deceive). The English proverb *What would a young cat do but eat mice* is particularly expressive due to the fact that it is constructed in the form of a rhetorical question, contains the zoonyms *cat* and *mice* and it is allegoric in form. Russian proverbs consider lack of intelligence, thoughtlessness and unreliability as the main shortcomings of youth. The young man is compared to a crane that flew high and sat low, to a young moon that does not shine all night. The young mind is compared to spring ice — fragile and ready to break at any moment. The “молодой дружок” (young friend) is also compared to the spring ice, thus the proverb states that a young man is unreliable. The expressiveness of these proverbs is given by the use of zoonyms (crane), words with diminutive suffixes (*молоденький* — young, *умок* — mind, *ледок* — ice) and rhymes (*взлетел — сел, красив — крив*). As it seen from the examples, the state of youth in Russian proverbs is conveyed through natural phenomena that surround a person (the moon, spring ice), which are close and understandable to a common man. The analysis shows that the English proverbs of this group reveal mainly those shortcomings of youth that harm the young people themselves, while Russian proverbs also draw attention to those qualities that harm the people around them. One cannot rely on the young moon, which does not shine all night and cannot illuminate the road, one cannot rely on a young friend who can break like spring ice (betray, leave in a difficult situation). The national and cultural originality of Russian proverbs, closely related to the peculiarities of mentality, is also manifested here. We can note the importance of collective cooperation for Russian people, which is coherent with the opinion of A.V. Sergeeva, that “collectivism is an ancient feature of the Russian archetype, inherited with the traditions of paganism” [21. P.156]. This determines attention to characteristic traits that help or hinder collective cooperation.

The next group of proverbs, which enshrine the antagonism of old age and youth, is important for our research. Here are examples of English proverbs: *Youth and age will never agree; Where old age is evil, youth can learn no good; Young men think old men fools, and old men know young men to be so; The old cow thinks she was never a calf; Youth may suppose, age only knows; In youth and beauty, wisdom is but rare*. Let us also give Russian correspondences: *Молодой старику не верит* (The young man does not believe the old man); *В чем молод похвалишься, в том под старость покаешься* (What you boast of when you are young, you will repent of when you are old); *Стар, да нетух, молод, да протух* (Old but a rooster, young but rotten); *Молодое вино в голову ударяет, а старое душу согревает* (Young

wine goes to head, but old wine warms the soul); *Молодые — удалые, старые — лукавые* (The young are daring, the old are crafty).

The first two English proverbs *Youth and age will never agree* and *Where old age is evil, youth can learn no good*, just like the Russian proverb *Молодой старику не верит* (The young man does not believe the old man), are close in the meaning, but reveal different aspects of the meaning of “young and old people cannot reach an agreement”. From the impossibility of agreement follows distrust and the inability to learn anything. Both English proverbs are aphorisms in form, built on the opposition of Abstract vocabulary: *youth* and *age/old age*, while the Russian proverb is more expressive due to laconicism and the use of more concrete and colloquial vocabulary as a contrast: *молодой* (young) — *старик* (old man). The expressiveness of the English proverb *Young men think old men fools, and old men know young men to be so* is due to the use of syntactic parallelism, contrast and reduced vocabulary (*fool*) with a touch of irony. Another English proverb *Youth may suppose, age only knows*, also expressed in the form of an aphorism, acquires additional expressiveness due to asyndeton and rhyme (suppose — knows). The expressiveness of the English proverb *The old cow thinks she was never a calf* in the meaning of “an old man does not want to understand a young man” is achieved through allegory with the use of zoonyms (cow, calf). The analysis shows that Russian proverbs of this group put special emphasis on adjectives: they use substantivized adjectives (*молодой, старый*) and short forms of adjectives (*стар, молод*). The proverb *В чем молод похвалишься, в том под старость покаешься* (What you boast of when you are young, you will repent of when you are old) is a generalized personal statement, enriched with opposition, which is expressed by the use of lexical antonymy; its expressiveness is enhanced by the use of the same form of verbs with rhyming endings *похвалишься* (you will boast) — *покаешься* (you will repent). The expressiveness of another Russian proverb *Стар, да петух, молод, да протух* (Old but a rooster, young but rotten) is due to the use of the zoonym *петух* (rooster) and the stylistically lowered word *протух* (rotten), as well as due to the rhyming endings. Ellipsis gives this proverb laconicism and the conjunction *да* in the meaning of “but” gives a colloquial sounding. In the proverb *Молодые — удалые, старые — лукавые* (The young are daring, the old are crafty) there are nominal parts of speech in the absence of verbal ones, the emphasis is on adjectives, i.e. on characteristics, not on actions. The absence of verbs also gives the proverb a laconic sounding. The most original Russian proverb is *Молодое вино в голову ударяет, а старое душу согревает* (Young wine goes to head, but old wine warms the soul) which uses the word *душа* (soul), which is characteristic of the Russian mentality. This proverb is based on a contrast: a young man is compared to new wine, and an old man is compared to old wine. The use of metaphors *ударяет в голову* (goes to the head) and *душу согревает* (warms the soul) gives the proverb a special expression.

It is interesting to consider what features are attributed to youth and old age by English and Russian proverbs. We see that English proverbs emphasize the intelligence and wisdom of older people, their ability to reason rationally (they know, not assume), while youth is beautiful, but prone to unfounded judgments. Russian proverbs emphasize the good spirits, prudence and cunning of an elderly person in comparison with the short-sightedness and daring of young people. And at the same time, the English proverbs *Where old age is evil, youth can learn no good* and *The old cow thinks she was never a calf* indicate that it is the old people who are responsible for the lack of mutual understanding between the elderly and the young, while the Russian proverb *Молодой старику не верит* says that young people are responsible for distrust.

Two proverbs can be distinguished into a special subgroup, the English proverb *Better be an old man's darling than a young man's slave* and the Russian one *С молодым жить весело, со старым хорошо* (It's fun to live with the young, it's good to live with the old), in which youth and old age are contrasted in the context of marital relationships. In the English proverb the semantic contradiction is supported by the antithesis *darling — slave*, in which the second component (slave) has a strong negative connotation, and the proverb itself generally shows a more pragmatic approach [22. P. 1085–1086] to the marriage itself. In the Russian proverb the antithesis *весело — хорошо* (fun — good) does not have a negative connotation, although the contradiction between “young” and “old” remains. The expressiveness of the English proverb is emphasized by the comparative form and contrast of lexical occasional antonyms (man's darling — man's slave). The Russian proverb is expressive and laconic due to the use of comparison, syntactic parallelism and ellipsis in the second part of the proverb.

Another important group consists of proverbs in which the contrast between old age and youth is more of a complementary nature than a rivalry: *You cannot put an old head on young shoulders; If youth but knew, if age but could; When young is beautiful, when old is clever; Youth lives on hope, old age on memory*. And here are Russian proverbs: *Молодым — гулянье, старикам — покой* (Fun for the young, peace for the old); *Молоденький умок старым умом крепится* (A young mind is strengthened by an old mind); *Молодого — в битву, старого — в совет* (The young goes into battle, the old goes into council); *Молодость плечами покренче, а старость — головой* (Youth has stronger shoulders, and old age has stronger heads); *Молодость живет мечтами, старость — воспоминаниями* (Youth lives with dreams, old age with memories).

The proverbs of this group tell us about the differences between youth and old age, and these differences look like complementary, hypothetically or practically. Thus, in the first English proverb *You cannot put an old head on young shoulders* combining of an “old head” with “young shoulders” could give a good result, as well as in the second proverb *If youth but knew, if age but could* the “knowledge” of old age, combined with the “possibility” of youth, could

achieve excellent results. The expressiveness of the first English proverb is created due to the contextual antonymy of somatisms (*old head — young shoulders*). The expressiveness of the second English proverb is due to syntactic parallelism and conditional mood. In Russian proverbs *Молоденький умом старым умом крепится* (A young mind is strengthened by an old mind); *Молодого — в битву, старого — в совет* (The young goes into battle, the old goes into council) the possibilities of complementarity and mutual assistance of the old and the young are shown most clearly. Thus, the “young mind” thanks to the help of the “old mind” will become “stronger” itself and the mutual assistance of the old in the council and the young in battle should lead both to a common victory. The proverb *Молодого — в битву, старого — в совет* is especially interesting due to its appeal to the topic of interaction between the older and younger generations in the military sphere. We noted in one of our earlier works that the Russian mentality is characterized by the concepts of mutual assistance and self-sacrifice: in battle they ensure victory [23. P. 309]. The expressive means of these proverbs are the opposition of substantivized adjectives *старый* (old) and *молодой* (young), incompleteness of syntactic constructions, emphasis on nominal forms, syntactic parallelism. In the proverb *Молоденький умом старым умом крепится* the expressive means are the use of words with diminutive suffixes — diminutives (*молоденький, умок*).

A separate subgroup consists of proverbs, which state that wisdom and other positive qualities attributed to age do not actually depend on age. Here are some examples: *Be old when young, if you would be young when*; *Молод годами, да стар умом* (Young in years, but old in mind); *Молод телом, да старенек делом* (Young in body, but old in deed); *Молодость не в годах, а в силе* (Youth is not in years, but in strength); *Не красна старость годами, а делами* (Old age is great not in years, but in deeds).

Upon analysis, we see that the English proverb contains an edification, but in form it is an incentive sentence; the deep meaning of this proverb is conceived by the expressive repetitions of the words *old* and *young*. Two Russian proverbs, *Молод годами, да стар умом* (Young in years, but old in mind) and *Молод телом, да старенек делом* (Young in body, but old in deed), have a similar syntactic structure and contain an antithesis, which is based on the lexical antonymy of short forms of adjectives. They are laconic and very similar in figurative meaning; the second proverb contains the diminutive *старенек* (old) which increases its emotiveness. The originality of the two other Russian proverbs is due to the use of Abstract vocabulary (youth — *молодость*, old age — *старость*). They contain an expressive clarification, and have a similar colloquial syntactic structure. It is interesting that four Russian proverbs seem to complement the English one: they successively reveal first the meaning of “old in youth” (young in years — old in mind, old in deeds), and then the meaning of “young in old age” (youth — in strength, not in years; old age is great in deeds, not in years).

## Conclusion

Our comparative structural and semantic analysis of English and Russian proverbs allowed us to draw the following conclusions. From the point of view of phraseological meaning, both Russian and English proverbs have much in common: old age is recognized as an age that is characterized by wisdom along with illnesses and infirmities, and young people are full of strength, sometimes reckless and daring, but at the same time overly trusting and in most cases simple minded. At the same time, we see the differences. Only in Russian proverbs honesty of heart, sincerity, i.e. more concrete positive qualities, are attributed to youth, while English proverbs mostly describe neutral or negative typical traits of youth. The comparisons of individual human traits with natural phenomena are more common in Russian proverbs, which indicates the close relationship of Russian people with nature.

Russian proverbs are more emotional and more concrete, while among English proverbs we see more often aphoristic statements that contain deep philosophical generalizations. They are often borrowed from other languages and formed in a later period of time. From the point of view of the use of expressive means, proverbs of the two languages also have common features. They use such stylistic devices as comparison, contrast, metaphor, metonymy, personification, gradation, hyperbole, irony, allegory, paradox. Similar means of syntax can be distinguished: asyndeton, incomplete sentences, syntactic parallelism, ellipsis, rhythmic and phonetic design of proverbs, as well as the use of incentive and conditional sentences for valediction and advice. In Russian proverbs, such means of expressive syntax as infinitive sentences, generalized personal sentences, etc are used more often. Also, English and Russian proverbs use similar expressive vocabulary: zoonyms, somatisms, while in the Russian language archaisms, vernacular, words with reduced stylistic colouring and words with diminutive suffixes are used more often. Thus, we often see the use of allegory in the proverbs of both languages which tell us about the virtues of old age. Folklore methods such as rhythmic organization, rhymed endings, and emotionally charged vocabulary are used widely in Russian proverbs, while statements in the form of teachings with the use of neutral and Abstract vocabulary are relatively more common in English proverbs with similar meanings. In some English proverbs we also find (though much less frequently) rhythmic organization and rhymed endings, stylistically reduced vocabulary, which, of course, gives them a more colloquial colouring and expressiveness. Thus, the similarity of proverbs, their figurative structure, figurative motivation and internal form indicates the similarity of figurative and associative connections in human thinking, and their differences indicate their historical and cultural traditions. The analysis made it possible to show the nationally specific features of the understanding of the main features of old and young age by both peoples, as well as to identify the role of linguistic means that reflect the specifics of mentality.

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#### **Сведения об авторе:**

*Орлова Татьяна Геннадьевна*, кандидат филологических наук, доцент кафедры иностранных языков факультета гуманитарных и социальных наук, Российский университет дружбы народов (117198, Российская Федерация, г. Москва, ул. Миклухо-Маклая, 6); *научные интересы:* сравнительное языкознание, паремиология, фразеология, семантика; *e-mail:* orlova-tg@rudn.ru

ORCID: 0000-0002-2777-3930; ELibrary SPIN-код: 6686–7256; ResearcherID: AA-I-5808-2021; Scopus Author ID: 57201723102.

#### **Information about the author:**

*Tatiana G. Orlova*, PhD in Philology, Associate Professor of the Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, RUDN University (6, Miklukho-Maklaya st., Moscow, Russian Federation, 117198); *Resercher interests:* comparative linguistics, phraseology, paroemiology, semantics; e-mail: orlova-tg@rudn.ru

ORCID: 0000-0002-2777-3930; SPIN-code: 6686–7256; ResearcherID A-6149-2017; Scopus Author ID: 57201723102.