



**The image of a man
in the english and
russian paroemiological
world pictures**

THE IMAGE OF A MAN IN THE ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN PAROEMIOLOGICAL WORLD PICTURES

LA IMAGEN DE UN HOMBRE EN LAS IMÁGENES DEL MUNDO PAROEMIOLÓGICO INGLÉS Y RUSO

ABSTRACT

Paroemias constitute an extremely important language layer in the field of gender perspective investigation which helps identify various gender stereotypes of different peoples. This article is devoted to the gender issues in English and Russian paroemiological world pictures, images and assessments correlated to a man, and the semantic areas where they are most prevalent. The main methods of a research are common-language methods: method of scientific observation, comparative and contrastive method, descriptive method. Based on studies of English and Russian proverbs and sayings which reflect the gender stereotypes of the compared ethnic groups, the authors try to create man's image in each socio-cultural environment and to reveal their common and specific characteristics. Analysis of empirical material allows drawing the following conclusion: portraits of the English and Russian men in the considered PWP differ considerably. One of the main components of an image of the English man is the set of the rules shown to him. For the English man except worthy behavior and inner world the large role is played by welfare and appearance.

KEYWORDS: paroemia, paroemiological world picture, gender stereotypes, gender marked proverbs, ethnocultural society

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RESUMEN

Las paroemias constituyen una capa de lenguaje extremadamente importante en el campo de la investigación de la perspectiva de género que ayuda a identificar varios estereotipos de género de diferentes pueblos. Este artículo está dedicado a las cuestiones de género en las imágenes, las imágenes y las evaluaciones del mundo paroemiológico inglés y ruso correlacionadas con un hombre, y las áreas semánticas donde prevalecen más. Los métodos principales de una investigación son los métodos de lenguaje común: método de observación científica, método comparativo y contrastivo, método descriptivo. Con base en estudios de refranes y proverbios en inglés y ruso que reflejan los estereotipos de género de los grupos étnicos comparados, los autores intentan crear la imagen del hombre en cada entorno sociocultural y revelar sus características comunes y específicas. El análisis del material empírico permite extraer la siguiente conclusión: los retratos de los hombres ingleses y rusos en la PWP considerada difieren considerablemente. Uno de los principales componentes de una imagen del hombre inglés es el conjunto de reglas que se le muestran. Para el hombre inglés, excepto en el comportamiento digno y en el mundo interior, el bienestar y la apariencia juegan un papel importante.

PALABRAS CLAVE: paroemia, imagen paleobiológica del mundo, estereotipos de género, proverbios marcados por el género, sociedad etnocultural

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1. INTRODUCTION

A paroemiological world picture of any language represents a general view, based on particular ethnocultural society's general stereotypes concerning life activities. According to T.A. Shaykhullin, a gender paroemiological world picture can be found in every cultural group. He stresses that "a gender metaphor takes place in the process of assessment of various kinds of social and natural phenomena and has a permanent impact on them" [1]. In accordance with E.S. Khuzina, gender studies are aimed at "psychological, social and cultural factors which determine public attitude towards men and women, individuals' behaviour in relation to their belonging to a particular sex, and stereotypical images about male and female features" [2]. Thus, a gender paroemiological world picture is considered a reflection of gender stereotypes which "reveal the logic of practical reasoning and an axiological conception with regard to a social sex" [3].

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The aim of the study is to determine general features of a man or husband in the paroemiological world pictures of the English and Russian languages.

Research data were obtained by means of analyzing 40 English and 42 Russian gender marked proverbs and sayings which contain such key words like man, gentleman, husband, and he.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the analysis of the study results there are seven semantic groups of different man's or husband's features:

- 1) inner world,
- 2) behaviour,

- 3) relationship a husband (a man) – a wife (a woman),
- 4) appearance,
- 5) age,
- 6) financial security,
- 7) customary rules.

It should be stressed that being involved in the process of studying of the English and Russian proverbs and sayings describing general man's or husband's features, the authors experienced some difficulties relative to a classification of the data caused by the semantic versatility of the examined proverbs and sayings. "Thus, a specific semantic area can only be well-defined at a high level of contact: a female vision of a world and a male world view. Within each of these areas one can find different semantic groups, but they cannot be regarded as finally defined ones" [4].

A summary of the study results is shown in Table 1 which presents the percentage of the total number of examined paroemias included into the targeted semantic groups.

Table 1. (See annexes)

As the above table shows, the images of an Englishman and Russian man, presented in the paroemiological world pictures of the two languages, differ from each other significantly.

Drawing on the frequency of the paroemias used in the proverbs and sayings, we can determine the most important features for the examined images. The most significant features of the Russian man image in the paroemiological world picture (PWP) belong to the group Relationship. The other groups, in order of importance, are Behaviour, Inner world, Age, Compliance of customary rules, Financial security and Appearance. It should be pointed out that the groups financial security and appearance include a small amount of proverbs.

While studying the image of an Englishman in the PWP, we discovered absolutely opposite stereotype. The main feature of the Englishman's image is a compliance of customary rules. The other groups presented in order

of importance are Financial security, Inner world, Behaviour, Appearance, Relationship, and Age. As it can be seen, the features financial security and appearance in the image of an Englishman are more important than in man's image in the Russian PWP. However, there are similar features for the two PWPs in some semantic groups.

The semantic group Inner world both in the Russian and English paroemiological world pictures includes the following negative features:

COWARDICE:

He that feareth every bush must never go a-birding [5]; He that fears death lives not [5].

The positive image of the inner world of Russian and English men in the examined PWPs is represented by one common feature:

WISDOM:

In the husband wisdom, in the wife gentleness [5]; У умного мужа и глупая жена досужа [6] (A stupid woman shows some experience by marrying a clever man), Мужик-то сер, а ум-то у него не волк (не черт) съел [7] (The man isn't handsome but he is clever).

The following personal qualities of a man represent the group Behaviour and are common for the two examined languages:

THRIFT:

Men make houses, women make homes [8]; Мужик в семье, что матица в избе [9] (A man is as important for his family as his wife for his house), Мужик, что мешок: что положат, то и несет [10] (A man takes everything he is given);

HONESTY:

An honest man's word is as good as his bond [5], Правдивому мужу лукавство не под нужду [6] (An honest man doesn't need to be dodgy).

In addition, a man in the English PWP acts as his Motherland's patriot: An English man's home is his castle [5]; an even-tempered man: A gentleman makes no noise [5].

Negative characteristics of the examined paroemias differ from each other completely.

A man in the English PWP behaves silly (like a monkey): A man is an ape in velvet [11], he is a scandal maker: A quarrelsome man has no good neighbours [12].

Man's portrait in the Russian PWP contains a lot of negative features:

SLOPPINESS:

Баба – ай-ай, а муж – малахай [6] (The woman is strong and powerful but her husband is weak and useless), Жена мелет, а муж спит [6] (A husband is sleeping while his wife is grinding grain), Жена прядет, а муж пляшет [6] (A husband is dancing while his wife is spinning);

JEALOUSY:

За ревнивым мужем быть – не в корысти свою молодость износить [10] (To have a jealous husband means to spoil your life);

MENDACITY:

Не всякую правду муж жене рассказывает, а и рассказывает, так обманывает [6] (A husband doesn't often tell his wife the truth, even if he does – he tells her lies), Не рассказывает муж жене, сколько у него денег в сундуке, да сама знает [6] (A husband doesn't tell his wife how much money keeps in his trunk, but it doesn't matter – she knows it anyway);

DRUNKENNESS:

Мужик год не пьет, и два не пьет, а как черт прорвет, так и все пропьет [9] (A man hasn't drunk alcohol for a year or two, but if he starts drinking, he'll spend all his money on it), Жена у посудника (дома), и муж у посудника (в кабаке) [6] (A wife is at home, but her husband is in the pub);

UNFAITHFULNESS:

У кого на уме молитва да пост, а у него бабий хвост [6] (Some men pray and think about God while others think about having love affairs).

Semantic group Appearance in the Russian PWP is represented by one proverb, which in-

dicates that it is not important for a man to be handsome: Мужчина, коли хоть немножко казистее черта, – красавец [6] (A man is handsome if he is a bit more attractive than a devil). The English PWP, on the contrary, contains more paroemias concerning man's appearance:

appearance can be deceiving:

He looks like a saint but the devil he is [5];

a man must look neat:

A man with a good suit can go anywhere [11].

The semantic group Age in the English and Russian PWP expresses the negative attitude to age difference between a husband and a wife: Old men, when they marry young women, make much of death [5]; Видима беда, что у старого жена молода [6] (The trouble is evident when an old man has a young wife), Муж молод, жена стара – беда не мала [7] (A husband is young, a wife is old – the trouble isn't small), Муж стар, а жена молода – дожидайся детей; муж молод, а жена стара – дожидайся плетей [6] (A husband is old, and a wife is young – wait for children; the husband is young, and the wife is old – wait for lashes).

The special attention in the English and Russian PWP is paid to the old age as a negative male quality: Age and wedlock tame man and beast [12], An old man in love is a flower in winter [11]; Старый муж ворчит-журит, раздевать, разувать велит [6] (An old husband grumbles-rebukes, orders to put off his clothes and shoes), Старый муж да упрямый муж – поперек постели лежит [6] (An old husband is a stubborn husband – across a bed lies), Старый муж и на руку колодой валится [6] (An old husband falls on your hand like a log).

However, in both considered PWP an old husband is considered a little better than a young one: Better be an old man's darling, than a young man's slave [8], Стар муж, так удушлив; молод, так не сдружлив [6] (If a husband is old, it is so suffocating; but if he is young, he is not friendly).

The English paremiological fund contains many proverbs making semantic group Fi-

nancial security which, in turn, breaks up to the following subgroups:

a man must be prosperous:

Jack would be a gentleman if he had money [5];

wealth is a shortcoming:

Wine and wealth change wise men's manners [5], He that has little, is less dirty [5].

In the Russian PWP two proverbs concerning wealth of a man have been revealed:

financial security isn't important:

Коли у мужа с женою лад, так не надобен и клад [10] (If a husband and a wife have harmonious relations, then treasure isn't a necessary factor);

wealth is an advantage:

У мужа толсто (в кармане), и у жены широко (в угощении, хозяйстве) [6] (If a husband has a thick (pocket), than a wife has a wide (treating, housekeeping)).

The following features of the relations between the representatives of male and female genders entering into the group Relationship in the English and Russian PWP can be called negative characteristics:

a husband is always ignorant:

The husband is always the last to know [8], И муж не знает, где жена гуляет [6] (The husband doesn't know where his wife walks);

a husband takes a subordinated position in a family:

Age and wedlock tame man and beast [12], He that has a wife has a master [12]; Жена верховодит, так муж по соседям бродит [6] (If a wife bosses, than her husband spends much time at the neighbours' place), Муж в голях, жена в бусовых серьгах [6] (The husband is naked, but his wife is in (glass)beads and earrings), Ження едет родня – отворяй ворота, мужня родня – запирай ворота [6] (If wife's relatives come – open the gate, but if they are husband's relatives – lock the gate).

Besides, in the Russian paremiological fund there are paroemias revealing the fact of violence against a man by a woman: Бранит жена мужа, а бить его не мужа [10] (A wife scolds her husband, but it's not right to beat him), В старые годы бывало – мужья жен бивали, а ныне живет, что жена мужа бьет [6] (In the old days was – husbands beat their wives, but nowadays a wife beats her husband).

Despite of this fact, the majority of the Russian proverbs (27,5%) represent a man as a chief of a family. The English paremiological fund contains much less (2,15%) proverbs with such semantics: If the husband be not at home, there is nobody [5], Every man is a king in his own house [5]; Муж – голова, жена – душа [6] (Husband is the head, wife is soul), Муж в доме, что глава (крест) на церкви [6] (Husband in the house like the head (cross) on the roof of the church), Мое дело – сторона, а муж мой прав [6] (My business is to stay aside, but my husband is right).

In the Russian PWP a man/husband is presented as:

a getter:

Муж – дому строитель, нищете отгонитель [7] (Husband is the builder of the house, and offkeeper of poverty), Муж – как бы хлеба нажить, а жена – как бы мужа избыть [6] (Husband thinks how to acquire bread, and wife thinks how to destroy her husband), Побереги, Бог, мужа, не возьмет мужа [6] (God, save my husband, not to suffer from poverty), Мужик гол, а в руках кол; на него надежда, то будет и одежда [10] (Man is naked, but he has a stake in his hands; on it is the hope, it will provide clothes);

a defender:

Муженек хоть всего с кулачок, да за мужниной головой не сажу сиротой [6] (Though my husband is not bigger than a cam, I don't sit at the husband's neck like an orphan), Худ мой мужилка, а завалюсь за него – не боюсь никого [6] (Though my husband is skinny, behind him I am not afraid of anybody).

The portrait of a man/husband in the English and Russian PWP is expanded with

paroemias, concerning Compliance of Customary rules.

In paremiological fund of the Russian language the following instruction acts as the only standard rule:

there must be a man/husband in a family:

Без мужа голова не покрыта; без жены дом не крыт [6] (Without a husband the head isn't covered; without a wife the house isn't covered), Без мужа жена – всегда сирота [6] (Without a husband his wife is always the orphan), Без мужа не жена [6] (Without a husband she is not a wife).

In the group standard rules at the English PWP there are paroemias imposing a large number of requirements for the English man. This semantic group breaks up into two sub-groups: a man must and a man mustn't. Rules are represented in the order of reduction of a quantitative ratio.

A man must:

be able to listen and be silent:

He is wise who says nothing when he has nothing to say [5];

be active:

He that hesitates is lost [5];

be self-controlled::

He is not fit to command others, that cannot command himself [5], He that cannot obey cannot command [8], He that is angry, is seldom at ease [5];

be hard-working:

He that sings on Friday, will weep on Sunday [5], He that won't work shall not eat [11];

keep his word:

He promises mountains and performs molehills [5];

be honest:

He that has lost his credit, is dead to the world [5];

be generous:

He who gives to another bestows on himself [5];

respect others:

He who blackens others doesn't whiten himself [11], He that respects not isn't respected [12];

be married:

Bachelors are but half of a pair of scissors [12];

marry in time:

Men who marry late in life often beget fools [11].

A man mustn't:

drink:

Wine and wealth change wise men's manners [5];

boast:

He that praises himself, spatters himself [5];

commit adultery:

He who has one foot in a brothel has another in a hospital [11].

4. CONCLUSIONS

Thus, the analysis of empirical material allows drawing the following conclusion: portraits of the English and Russian men in the considered PWP differ considerably. One of the main components of an image of the English man is the set of the rules shown to him. For the English man except worthy behavior and inner world the large role is played by welfare and appearance. In the Russian PWP a man is mainly presented as the head, the getter and the defender. In spite of the fact that behaviour of the Russian man is represented rather negatively, than positively, it is still an important feature along with characteristics of his inner world.

5. SUMMARY

Nowadays the need of studying of proverbs is explained by the tendencies observed in modern linguistics in connection with processes of globalization and active interaction of various national cultures that stimulates carrying out researches of national language pictures of the world, features of the language consciousness of various peoples, manifestations of national peculiar features in the course of conceptualization and a categorization of human experience of interaction with surrounding reality.

At the same time comparative researches of works of folklore are of particular importance. According to W. von Humboldt, "various languages are bodies of their original thinking and perception for the nations" [13].

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ANNEXES

№	Semantic Groups	English Proverbs			Russian Proverbs		
		Total	Positive Features	Negative Features	Total	Positive Features	Negative Features
1	Inner world	19/14%	3/2,5%	16/11,5%	17/17,5%	10/10,2%	7/7,3%
2	Behaviour	12/8,5%	9/6,4%	3/2,1%	22/22,5%	3/3%	19/19,5%
3	Relationship	8/5,7%	3/2,15%	5/3,5%	39/39,7%	27/27,5%	12/12,2%
4	Appearance	8/6%	6/4,5%	2/1,5%	1/1%	1/1%	—
5	Compliance of customary rules	65/47%	47/34%	18/13%	5/5,1%	5/5,1%	—
6	Age	4/2,8%	—	4/2,8%	13/13,2%	—	13/13,2%
7	Financial security	23/16%	15/10,3%	8/5,7%	1/1%	—	1/1%

Table 1

