

VERBALIZATION OF THE CONCEPT *WEALTH* IN MARI AND AMERICAN PROVERBS AND SAYINGS: UNIVERSAL AND SPECIFIC FEATURES

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Abstract

The article considers verbalization of the concept *wealth* reflected in the paroemiological view of the world of the Mari language and American English. Wealth as the possession of material and nonmaterial things: money, finance, personal properties or spiritual values is distributed among different layers of society unequally. The study of the proverbial view of the world allows describing peoples' attitude to wealth and reconstructing a part of the linguistic view of the world which conceptualizes the phenomenon of wealth in different languages. The objective of the research is a comparative cognitive analysis of the Mari and American paroemiae verbalizing the concept of wealth aiming at revealing their universal and specific features. In the Mari language 35 units reflecting the concept of wealth either implicitly or explicitly have been found. American English contains 115 paroemiae with the verbalizers *rich*, *riches* and *wealth*. The words *поян*, *поянтлык*, *йорло*, *нужна* serve as verbalizers in the Mari language and *rich*, *riches*, *wealth* – in American English. The analysis of the paroemae selected with the help of continuous sampling method from significant Mari and American dictionaries of proverbs and sayings allowed performing a semantic and contextual analysis of lexical units verbalizing the concept *wealth*. All the paroemiae were divided into four groups. As a result, common, universal and specific features of conceptualization in both linguocultures were revealed. The research shows common, partially common and specific dominant ideas where specific features prevail, which proves that peoples are unique in the perception and conceptualization of the world due to their own experience.

Keywords: proverb, paroemiological view of the world, concept, wealth, the Mari language, American English.

1. INTRODUCTION

Wealth as a possession by people of material and nonmaterial goods, means of production, real estate, private property and spiritual values is unevenly distributed among different layers of society which has deep historical roots. The study of the paroemiological view of the world allows describing people's attitude to

wealth fixed in the language and reconstructing the segment of the linguistic view of the world containing conceptualization of the phenomenon *wealth*.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

Wealth and its opposite pole – poverty represent one of the most important aspects of the paroemiological view of the world. The objective of the research is a comparative cognitive analysis of the Mari and American proverbs and sayings verbalizing the concept of wealth. According to V. A. Maslova's definition, a concept is a mental nationally coloured construct where the plane of content is represented by the whole body of knowledge of wealth as a phenomenon and the plane of expression are all lexical units nominating and describing the object (Maslova, 2004, p. 28).

3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

Continuous sampling method, complete semantic, contextual and comparative analysis of lexical means, representing the concept of wealth in the Mari and English languages are used in this work as research methods.

The article belongs to the authors' series of articles devoted to the study of different concepts in the paroemiological views of the world of the English, Mari and Finnish languages (Kazyro, 2009, 31-35; Yakovleva, 2013, p. 69-86; Yakovleva, 2014, p. 649-652; Yakovleva, 2015, p. 253-262; Yakovleva, Kazyro, 2015, p. 21-33).

Proverbs and sayings from the dictionary «Марий калык ойпого, калыкмут-влак» (*Mari Folklore. Proverbs and Sayings*) by Mari folklorist A. E. Kitikov serve as a research material. The dictionary contains 35 units explicitly and implicitly representing the concept of wealth. As a research material to study a paroemiological view of the world of American English a unique *Dictionary of American Proverbs* is used. It is the most extensive collection of American proverbs ever published. The dictionary is a comprehensive record of proverbs being collected for forty years during field research by the American Dialect Society. It is based on oral rather than written sources and shows the geographical distribution of proverbs and their variants (Mieder, 1996).

Active collecting was carried out by dozens of scholars under the direction of Margaret M. Briant. The dictionary contains 15,000 proverbs and their variants in actual use in American speech. Editor-in-chief Wolfgang Mieder in the introduction to the dictionary points out that thousands of proverbs have found their way into American speech from classical, biblical, British, continental European and American literature. There are hundreds of proverbs that can be attributed to famous Americans, such as Benjamin Franklin, Abraham Lincoln, Herman Melville, Ernest Hemingway, Abigail Adams, Thomas Alva Edison, and Mark Twain.

4. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

4.1 Representation of the concept wealth in the paroemiological view of the world of the Mari language

The content structure of the concept *wealth* is formed from the proverbs with such key words as *поян*, *поянлык*, *йорло*, *нужна* (*wealthy*, *wealth*, *poor*) and also from a great number of proverbs where the concept is expressed implicitly. In addition to that, the concept of wealth is also represented in the proverbs with the key word *окса* 'money' but in the present article only the above-mentioned key words are considered. In the dictionary of the Mari language *Марий мутер* the word *поянлык* (*wealth*) is determined as 1) a great deal of material values, money; 2) wealth as the whole of material values; 3) plenty and diversity of smth; 4) magnificent beauty, splendor; 5) the whole of spiritual values (Abramova, 2000, p. 228). The word *поян* (*wealthy*) as an adjective has several meanings: 1) rich, well-off; 2) rich, plentiful; 3) splendor; 4) beautiful. As a noun it means *a rich man*; as an adverb – *richly* (Abramova, 2000, p. 227-228]. The word *йорло* (*poor*, *beggar*), *нужна* (*poor*, *poverty*) are also a component of the proverbs expressing the concept *wealth*. They are antonyms to the words *поян* (*wealthy*), *поянлык* (*wealth*) and antonymy, as it is well-known, is the opposition within one entity.

The research shows that the attitude to wealth as material values, money and also to a wealthy man is characterized by ambiguity. On the one side, possession of material values is considered positively as it gives certain advantages and makes life much easier. The semantic dominant in this case is strengthened by the use of the antithesis: *Улылык йоратыкта, укелык сойгыкта* (МК, 2004, p. 125). – 'Wealth makes people love, poverty makes cry', *Поян ең покогылым кочкеш, нужна еглан подкндыжат йбра* (МК, 2004, p. (3, с. 99). – A rich man eats dumplings, a poor one has to have shortbreads. *Поян шонымыж*

семын ила, нужна – йон мумыжо семын (МК, 2004, р. 99). – ‘A rich man lives as he wants, a poor man – as he can. *Поянлан эре Ыярня, йорлылан ўмыр мучко путо* (МК, 2004, р. 100). – ‘A rich man is always having a Cheese Fair Week, a poor man – Lenten season. *Поянын – вўта тич вольык, незерын – пўрткўргў тич икшыве* (МК, 2004, р. 100). ‘A rich man’s cattle barn is full of sheep; a poor man’s house is full of children’.

However, if you want to become rich you should work hard: *Мален пойышо иктат уке* (МК, 2004, р. 67). – ‘A sleepyhead will never become rich’. *Пашам ыштен поет, ойгырен йомат* (МК, 2004, р. 93). ‘You’ll become rich by working, you’ll go all to rack and ruin by grieving’. If one comes into money easily, one can lose it easily: *Куштылгын толшо куштылгын кая* (МК, 2004, р. 60). ‘Easy come, easy go’. One of the proverbs emphasizes a very interesting moment: ‘*Яришка поя гын, туняжым монда*’ (МК, 2004, р. 165). ‘If a poor gets rich he forgets about everything in the world’, meaning that he puts on airs. Semantic dominant of the proverb stresses that wealth can spoil a man.

Poverty and need are on the opposite pole of this entity (possession of material values). Thus, a semantic dominant of some proverbs means that a poor man’s life is hard and joyless: *Укеан енгын илышиже – йўсланымаш да орланымаш* (3, с. 124). – ‘A poor man’s life is all misery and suffering’. *Нужна енгын пиалже деч пий пиалат куеурак* (3, с. 79). – ‘A dog has more happiness than a poor man’. *Йорло енгын тагына пундашсе ложашыжымат пўтерен мардеж нангая* (3, с. 34). – ‘Wind blows off flour even from a poor man’s flour tray’. *Нужна калык кўм руа* (3, с. 79). – ‘Poor people cut stones’, *Нужна окнам кырен ок пура* (3, с. 79). – ‘Need comes in without knocking on the window’.

On the other side, a negative connotation predominates in the assessment of a rich man. Here are some examples: *Пешкыде поянын улыжо дене укеже иктат* (3, с. 95). – ‘You can’t get anything from a mean rich man’. *Поян ег - кўртньў пурса* (3, с. 99). – ‘A rich man is iron peas’ (meaning greediness). *Поян оза – шопна логар, поян иге – алдыр умша* (3, с. 99). – ‘A rich man’s mouth is like a coin purse, and of his offspring – like a ripkin’. *Поянлан пойымыжо семын шагалла чучеш* (3, с. 99). – ‘A rich man becoming rich needs more and more’. *Поянын намысыжын пундашыже уке* (3, с. 100). – ‘A rich man’s greediness doesn’t have a bottom. *Ракат райыштат ок тўсў, незер тўса* (3, с. 105). – ‘A rich man is mean in the heavens, but a poor man is uncomplaining’. Only one proverb has a positive connotation: *Улан енгым пагалат, ушан енгым ужым* (3, с. 124). – ‘A wealthy man is respected, a clever one is acknowledged’.

Philosophical approach to wealth is revealed in a number of proverbs. They emphasize that a wealthy life is a good one: *Коя лудым кўраш сай, улан илышым эрташ сай* (3, с. 54). – ‘It’s good to pluck a fat duck; it’s good to live a wealthy life’. At the same time the opposite side of this phenomenon is stressed: *Уке – ик ойго, уло – лу ойго* (3, с. 124). – ‘If you don’t have anything – it’s one sorrow, if you have something – it’s ten times more’.

To conclude the considerations about the meaning of material values represented in the Mari proverbial fund the following proverb can be used: *Улат – пешыжак ит йывырте, укеат – пешыжак ит ойгыро* (3, с. 124). ‘When you have something – don’t be too happy, when you have nothing – don’t worry much’. The keywords *поянлык, поян* (*wealth, wealthy*) are found in the proverbs in which not material but other values represent wealth, such as health, knowledge, work: *Таза – улан, таза – поян* (3, с. 114). – ‘A healthy man is wealthy; a healthy man is rich’. *Тазалык – эн куеу поянлык* (3, с. 114). – ‘Health is above wealth’. *Тазалыкым пазарыште от нал* (3, с. 114). ‘You can’t buy health on the market’. *Чыла поянлык – калыкыште* (3, с. 140). – ‘People are real wealth’. *Шинчымаш – эн куеу поянлык* (3, с. 144). – ‘Knowledge is above wealth’. *Тўняште эн куеу поянлык – паша* (3, с. 121). – ‘Work is the greatest wealth in the world’. Work is the most important value and wealth in Mari proverbial consciousness.

In conclusion it should be mentioned that the concept of wealth takes an important place in the paroemiological view of the world of the Mari people.

Wealth as the possession of material values has a positive connotation while in the proverbs representing a rich man a negative connotation prevails. The semantic dominants representing the concept of wealth are the following ones: “wealth makes life easier and more comfortable”, “to become rich one must work hard”, “wealth can spoil a man”, “a poor man’s life is hard and joyless”, “a rich man is mean”, “wealth is not a lasting value”.

4.2 Representation of the concept of wealth in the paroemiological view of the world of the English language

115 proverbs and sayings verbalized by the words *rich, riches, wealth* were found in the English language with the help of a continuous sampling method. The research verification was performed on the basis of

15,000 proverbs and sayings represented in the Dictionary of American Proverbs (7). The reconstruction of the image *wealth* is made on the basis of such linguistic lexemes as *rich, riches, money, wealth, gold, luxury*. Concept verbalization of the lexemes *rich, riches and wealth* is under consideration in the present article. All the paroemiological units representing the concept “*wealth*” were divided into four groups in the course of analysis:

The first group consists of paroemiae describing God's attitude to the rich:

1) the equality of rich and the poor by the birth: *The rich and poor meet together: the Lord is the maker of them all* (7, 508).

2) God favours the poor: *The rich ride in chaises and the poor walk with God. A rich man can no more enter he kingdom of heaven than a camel can pass through the eye of a needle; It is easier for a camel to get through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven* (7, 508).

Wealth as material values man's possession in the American proverbial view of the world is fairly highly representative and allows selecting **the second group** of proverbs. The following subgroups have been defined by definitional and contextual analyses:

1) The rich are wealthy due to their money, while the poor are rich because they have children. *The rich get richer, and the poor have children; A rich man for dogs and a poor man for babies* (7, 508); *Children are poor men's riches* (7, 510).

2) Material wealth is associated with fraud, dishonest behaviour and immorality: *A rich man is either a rogue or a rogue's heir* (7, 508). *Riches and virtue do not often keep each other company* (7, 509). *Virtue and riches seldom settle on one man* (7, 510). *Sell not virtue to purchase wealth, not liberty to purchase power* (7, 645).

3) Wealth is worshipped: *Wealth makes worship* (7, 646).

4) Wealth is not money: *Gold is wealth in fancy only* (7, 645]. The opposite attitude to wealth is contrasted with paroemiae emphasizing that wealth is money: *Where is gold there is wealth* (7, 645).

5) Material wealth often provokes inactivity, laziness and greed: *Inherited wealth is a big handicap to happiness; it is a certain death to ambition as cocaine is to morality. Wealth does not always improve us* (7, 645). *Wealth, like want, ruins many* (7, 645). *Wealth makes wit waver* (7, 645).

6) Wealth descended unexpectedly is insecure: *Sudden wealth is dangerous* (7, 645).

7) The power of wealth suppresses a person: *Few rich men own their property – their property owns them* (7, 508); *It is better poor and free than rich and a slave* (7, 509); *A man of wealth is a slave to his possessions* (7, 645); *Command your wealth, else it will command you* (7, 645).

8) Reasonable wealth: *He alone is rich who makes proper use of his riches* (7, 508); *for Riches are spreading* (7, 509); *Riches, like manure, do no good until they are spread* (7, 510); *Wealth unused may as well not exist* (7, 645); *Halving your wants quadruples your wealth* (7, 645). *The abuse of riches is worse than the want of them* (7, 510).

9) Material wealth is not an indicator of person's satisfaction: one is rich who has nothing, or someone who is smart: *He is not rich who is not satisfied* (7, 508); *He is rich who does not desire more* (7, 508); *He is rich who owes nothing* (7, 508); *He that is rich need not live sparingly, and he that can live sparingly need not be rich* (7, 508); *Richest is he who wants least* (7, 508); *Enough is great riches* (7, 508); *Wealth consists not of having great possessions but of having few wants* (7, 645). *Content makes poor men rich; discontent makes rich men poor* (7, 509). *Contentment is better than riches* (7, 510).

From the opposite point of view, love for wisdom does not allow a person to get rich: *Love of wit makes no man rich* (7, 509); *To have what you want is riches, but to be able to do without is power* (7, 510); *It is not wealth but wisdom that makes a man rich; It is not wealth but wisdom that makes a man rich* (7, 509). *Wealth is not his who has it but his who enjoys it* (7, 645).

10) Wealth cannot be taken to another world: *The richest man carries nothing away with him but his shroud* (7, 509); *Better be poor and live than rich and perish* (7, 509).

11) Wealth acquisition is interlaced with errors and failures: *He who never fails will never grow rich; the Gathering of riches is a pleasant torment* (7, 509). The semantic dominant of the proverb is enhanced by the use of the stylistic device of oxymoron.

- 12) Wealth should not be showed off: *A wiser grows rich by seeming poor* (7, 509).
- 13) It is easy to become rich among the poor: *When all are poor, it don't take much to make a rich man* (7, 509).
- 14) Dualism *wealth-poverty* aspires us to wealth, i.e. the wealth is better than a good name as you can buy nothing for it: *It is better to choose than great riches a good name, as name can't buy anything* (7, 509). The opposition to this paroemiae has an antonymous meaning: *A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches* (7, 510).
- 15) Wealth is easy to lose: *Riches have wings* (7, 509).
- 16) Wealth is the lack of debts: *Out of debt is riches enough* (7, 510).
- 17) Wealth in marriage costs one's freedom: *He who merry for wealth sells his liberty* (7, 645).
- 18) *The ransom of a man's life is his riches* (7, 510).

The third group consists of paroemiae in which wealth manifests itself in relation to spiritual values.

- 1) Wealth gives power: *A rich man has the world by the tail* (7, 508); *Wealth means power; it means leisure; it means ability* (7, 645).
- 2) Health is true wealth: *The first wealth is health; Wealth can buy no health* (7, 645); *Folks spend their health to acquire wealth and later spend their wealth in an effort to regain their health* (7, 645).
- 3) Wealth is not synonymous with true friendship. On the contrary, a really rich man has friends: *A rich man knows not his friends* (7, 508); *They are rich who have friends* (7, 509).
- 4) *Fortune can take away riches, but not courage* (7, 510). *He who loses wealth loses much; he who loses even one friend loses more; but he who loses his courage loses all* (7, 645).
- 5) *Happiness is more than riches* (7, 510).
- 6) *Knowledge is better than riches* (7, 510).
- 7) *Where genius, wealth and strength fails perseverance will succeed* (7, 645).
- 8) A man's wealth is measured by his good deeds: *A man's good wealth is the good he does in the world* (7, 645).
- 9) *Adversity makes a man wise, but not rich* (7, 509).
- 10) Association of poverty with honesty: *It is better to be an honest man than a rich one* (7, 509).

The fourth group includes paromiae reflecting the attitude of society towards a rich man; in some cases they stress his attractiveness:

- 1) Wealth is connected with happiness during one's life: *A rich man is happy while he is alive but sorry when he dies* (7, 508); *It's better to live rich than die rich* (7, 509).
- 2) Wealth attracts the opposite sex: *A rich man is never ugly in the eye of a girl* (7, 508).
- 3) A rich man is always clever and he has no bad merits: *A rich man's foolish sayings pass for wise ones* (7, 508). *Rich men have no faults* (7, 509).
- 4) It is easier for a wealthy man to draw attention of a lady: *A rich man's wooing is seldom long of doing* (7, 508).
- 5) Rich people can find friends easily: *Wealth makes many friends* (7, 645).
- 6) Interest of people is expressed towards wealth of a person, but not to his moral qualities: *All ask if a man be rich, not if he be good* (7, 508).
- 7) Wealth can be given only to certain, special people, it serves clever people, but it rules fool ones: *He that's ordained to be rich shall be rich; Riches serve a wise man but command a fool* (7, 509). Sometimes wealth is given to those who do not deserve it. *Wealth is like rheumatism: it falls on the weakest parts* (7, 645).
- 8) Subjective judging of people about other people's wealth: *Many of us wish we were as rich as people think we are* (7, 509).
- 9) Wealth requires certain responsibility: *Riches and care are inseparable* (7, 509); *Wealth and power do not*

give peace of mind (7, 645).

10) *If rich, be not elated, if poor, be not dejected* (7, 509).

4.3 Comparative analysis of the representation of the concept “wealth” in the Mari language and American English

A comparative semantic analysis of linguistic means representing the concept of wealth in the Mari and English languages has revealed universal and specific features emphasizing the peculiarities of archaic perception reflected in the proverbs of the two linguocultures.

The main verbalizers representing the concept “wealth” were defined as “*поян, поянлык, йорло, нужна*” (in the Mari language), and “*rich, riches, wealth*” (in the English language).

In both cultures the meaning of the concept “wealth” coincides with the possession of material and non-material values. Incorporation of material values is connected with the following characteristics in the Mari language: wealth stands for a set of material values and the attitude towards a rich person is ambiguous. Although possession of some material values is characterized as a positive feature as it makes life easier, the basis of wealth is labour. At the same time the assessment of a rich man is marked by a negative connotation. The semantic dominants representing the concept “wealth” in proverbs are the following ones: “wealth makes life easier and more comfortable”, “in order to be rich, you are to work”, “wealth can spoil a man”, “life of a poor man is difficult and cheerless”, “a rich man is characterized by his avidity”, “wealth is not a lasting value”.

In the American paroemiological view of the world the concept “wealth”, as a set of material values, is characterized by the following features that are marked by negative connotation: material wealth is connected with deception, dishonest behavior, immorality; richness is idolized; wealth encourages inactivity, laziness and greediness; a sudden fortune that a person acquires is dangerous as he does not know how to manage it correctly; power spoils a person; material wealth does not mean self-satisfaction as a rich man is not the one who has something, but the one who is clever; you cannot take away riches with you; acquisition of wealth is connected with mistakes and failures; wealth should not be shown off as it is easy to lose it; the ability to be satisfied with what you have is better than richness.

The attitude towards non-material values in the Mari paroemiological view of the world is connected with the following features: richness is not reflected in material things, but in other values, for instance, health, knowledge, experience and labour.

The analysis of American linguoculture towards personal moral and social values reveals the following specific features: wealth gives power; health / courage/ happiness / persistence / knowledge is more important than wealth; a person is rich when he has true friends; poverty is connected with honesty, wealth is associated with fraud.

Thus, similar semantic dominants defined in the two linguocultures are not numerous: richness of poor people stands for their children; life of rich people is full of pleasures; it is easy to lose wealth; poor people are honest. The main values are associated with non-material notions: health, knowledge and labour.

The analysis shows that the paroemiological view of Mari and American peoples is marked by specific features. As living conditions of the Mari people were quite modest and connected with hardships, in the paroemiological view wealth is associated with abundance of food, good nutrition and long-lasting clothes. The difference is also revealed in other features. For example, the American paroemiological view of the world highlights the attitude of God to the poor and the equality of the rich and the poor by their birth. Such a parameter is absent in the paroemiological view of the world of the Mari people as their culture had strong pagan traditions.

The paroemiological corpus of the English language includes paroemiae reflecting the idea that wealth is not money, wealth is more important than a good name and at the same time there are proverbs with completely opposite meaning.

One more specific feature of the analyzed fragment of the paroemiological view of the world in the English language is the positive attitude of society to a rich man, his attractiveness for the opposite sex, responsibility of a rich man. Wealth is not for everyone, it can be given to some limited amount of people as it serves only clever people and commands the fool.

The characteristics of a rich man are indicated by some irony: rich people have no imperfections; everything that is said by them is clever.

Interestingly, the paroemiological view of the world in both traditions highlights the appeal that a person should not be too proud if he is rich and he should not be sad if he is poor.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The concept “wealth” is verbalized differently in the Mari and English languages. They have common and specific features, the latter ones prevail. Semantic classification of paroemiae verbalizing the concept “wealth” allows defining the groups of complete and partial coincidence of the common and connotative meanings in the Mari and English languages and the groups having a different specific meaning. This fact reveals a peculiar verbalization of the world by different peoples, their unique perception and discovery of specific features in the categorization of reality which is closely connected with the experience of a certain nation.

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