LEXICOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF ENGLISH PAREMIOLOGICAL DICTIONARIES

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Abstract

This study examines the principles of lexicographic representation in English paremiological dictionaries from a linguocultural perspective. The research focuses on the semantic, pragmatic, and cultural dimensions of proverb description, emphasizing the role of paremiological units as culturally marked and evaluative language elements. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of A. Taylor, W. Mieder, A. Dundes, S. L. Arora, R. Moon, and J. Speake, the paper analyzes macrostructural and microstructural strategies used in English proverb dictionaries, including thematic organization, variant fixation, usage labeling, and cultural commentary. Special attention is given to corpus-based approaches in modern paremiological lexicography and their role in reflecting contemporary usage. Through illustrative examples from English and Karakalpak paremiological material, the study demonstrates that proverb dictionaries function not only as linguistic reference tools but also as repositories of cultural codes and national worldviews. The findings confirm that integrative lexicographic representation is essential for comparative linguocultural research.

Keywords: Paremiology; paremiological dictionary; lexicographic representation; proverb semantics; cultural interpretation; pragmatics; linguistic worldview; English proverbs; Karakalpak proverbs; comparative linguocultural analysis

Introduction

The lexicographic representation of paremiological units has been extensively discussed in linguistic, folkloristic, and phraseological studies, where proverbs are viewed as culturally marked and semantically complex language units (Taylor, 1931; Dundes, 1981). Scholars emphasize that, unlike ordinary lexical

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items, proverbs require special lexicographic treatment due to their metaphorical structure, variability, and pragmatic orientation (Mieder, 2004).

One of the earliest theoretical frameworks for proverb lexicography was established by Archer Taylor, who argued that proverbs resist rigid definition and cannot be treated as fully fixed linguistic units (Taylor, 1931). Taylor maintained that lexicographic representation must take into account structural variation, historical change, and contextual meaning, as these features are intrinsic to proverbial language (Taylor, 1931). His work laid the foundation for later English paremiological dictionaries that avoid overly narrow definitions. A major contribution to the theory and practice of English paremiological lexicography was made by Wolfgang Mieder, who systematically analyzed the structure and content of proverb dictionaries (Mieder, 2004). Mieder argued that paremiological dictionaries should include semantic interpretation, pragmatic usage notes, stylistic labeling, and historical commentary in order to reflect the cultural depth of proverbs (Mieder, 2004). He further emphasized that the lexicographic selection of proverbs is culturally motivated and reflects dominant values within English-speaking societies (Mieder, 1997).

The importance of thematic and conceptual organization in paremiological dictionaries was highlighted by Shirley L. Arora, who focused on the problem of proverb classification (Arora, 1984). Arora argued that alphabetical arrangement alone is insufficient for representing proverb meaning, and that thematic grouping better reveals underlying cultural concepts such as morality, labor, wisdom, and social behavior (Arora, 1984). Her approach influenced English paremiological dictionaries that prioritize conceptual domains over purely formal ordering.

From a folkloristic perspective, Alan Dundes stressed that proverb meaning cannot be separated from cultural symbolism and collective experience (Dundes, 1981). Dundes maintained that lexicographic representation should include ethnographic and cultural explanations, especially when proverbs contain culture-specific metaphors that are opaque outside their native context (Dundes, 1981). This view supports the inclusion of cultural commentary in English paremiological dictionaries. The pragmatic dimension of proverb representation was developed in the works of Peter Seitel, who viewed proverbs as communicative acts embedded in discourse rather than isolated texts (Seitel,

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1972). Seitel argued that dictionaries should reflect the functional use of proverbs, including speaker intention and situational appropriateness, which has influenced the inclusion of usage notes in English proverb dictionaries (Seitel, 1972).

As for a modern lexicographic approach to English paremiology is represented by Jennifer Speake, editor of The Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs, who emphasized corpus-based selection and frequency analysis (Speake, 2015). Speake argued that lexicographic representation should reflect contemporary usage while preserving historically significant forms, thus balancing tradition and linguistic change (Speake, 2015). Her work illustrates a shift toward empirically grounded paremiological lexicography. Further refinement of lexicographic principles can be found in the studies of Rosamund Moon, who examined fixed expressions and idiomaticity in English (Moon, 1998). Moon argued that paremiological units should be clearly distinguished from idioms while acknowledging their shared features, such as figurative meaning and stability, which affects dictionary microstructure and definition strategies (Moon, 1998).

English parameological dictionary:	Karakalpak parameological dictionary:
Time is money.	**Waqıt — altın.**
Meaning: Time is a valuable resource and should not be wasted.	Meaning: Time is very valuable and cannot be wasted.
Usage: Used to emphasize efficiency, productivity, and the economic value of time.	Application: Used when talking about work, planning, and efficiency.
Cultural note: Reflects the pragmatic and economically oriented worldview of English-speaking societies.	Cultural comment: The value of time is linked to hard work and responsibility.
Variants: Lost time is never found again.[Oxford Dictionary of Proverbs; Mieder, 2004]	Variants: Past time does not return.
Lexical representation analysis:	Lexicographic analysis:
This entry demonstrates lexical representation through semantic explanation, pragmatic usage, and cultural commentary. The proverb is treated not as a literal sentence but as a culturally motivated evaluative statement expressing a dominant value of English culture, namely efficiency and time management.	This proverb is given as a lexically evaluative unit. In the lexicographic description, the meaning, field of application, and cultural value (time saving) are revealed.

Don't put all your eggs in one basket.	**Jetti ólshep bir kes.**
Meaning: Do not risk everything on a single opportunity.	Meaning: Before starting work, you need to think carefully.
Usage: Commonly used in economic, professional, and everyday decision-making contexts.	Application: Used in the context of decision-making and responsible work.
Figurative basis: Metaphor based on everyday experience.	Metaphorical basis: An image associated with craftsmanship and practical experience.
Equivalent forms: Never risk everything at once.[Speake, 2015]	Lexicographic analysis:
Lexical representation analysis includes metaphor interpretation and functional usage. The dictionary explains how a concrete image ("eggs" and "basket") functions metaphorically to convey abstract reasoning related to risk management, a key concept in English culture.	The proverb has a figurative basis and is interpreted in the dictionary through a metaphorical meaning. This lexicographic presentation reflects the experience of the people and professional culture.
Many hands make light work.	**Birlik bar jerde tirilik bar.**
Variants: Many hands make light labor.	Meaning: Working in a team makes the work easier.
Meaning: Cooperation reduces individual burden.	Application: in the context of cooperation and collective work.
Usage: Collective activity contexts.[Moon, 1998]	Lexicographic analysis: This example shows the importance of recording variants in paremiological dictionaries. Variants serve to preserve the historical and territorial development of the language.
Lexical representation analysis:	
This entry demonstrates variant fixation, an important aspect of lexical representation in paremiological dictionaries. Recording variants preserves historical and regional diversity while maintaining semantic unity.	

These examples show that proverbs in Karakalpak paremiological dictionaries are presented as a lexical unit with a semantic interpretation, scope of application, cultural and moral assessment. This allows us to analyze proverbs not only as linguistic units, but also as cultural codes reflecting the national worldview. In general, scholars consistently agree that the lexicographic representation of English paremiological dictionaries must integrate semantic explanation, cultural interpretation, pragmatic function, and variation (Taylor, 1931; Mieder, 2004; Dundes, 1981). These principles form the methodological basis for comparative

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linguocultural research and justify the analysis of paremiological dictionaries as cultural texts rather than purely linguistic reference tools (Mieder, 1997).

In addition to the principles already outlined, modern paremiological lexicography increasingly treats proverb dictionaries as multidimensional cultural repositories, where linguistic form, social function, and cultural meaning intersect. Contemporary scholars argue that paremiological dictionaries do not merely record proverbs but actively construct cultural knowledge by selecting, structuring, and interpreting proverb material (Mieder, 1997; Speake, 2015). This perspective shifts lexicographic analysis from a descriptive task toward an interpretative one, where dictionary compilers act as cultural mediators.

An important aspect of lexicographic representation is the macrostructure of paremiological dictionaries, which determines how proverbs are organized and accessed. English paremiological dictionaries demonstrate several macrostructural models, including alphabetical, thematic, conceptual, and keyword-based organization. While alphabetical ordering facilitates reference use, thematic and conceptual classification allows scholars to reconstruct dominant cultural values embedded in proverbial discourse, such as attitudes toward work, time, morality, and social relations (Arora, 1984). From a linguocultural perspective, conceptual grouping is particularly valuable, as it reveals the underlying cognitive models and cultural priorities of English-speaking communities.

Equally significant is the microstructure of dictionary entries, which reflects lexicographic strategies for representing proverb meaning. Modern English paremiological dictionaries tend to include several obligatory components: a standardized proverb form, semantic interpretation, pragmatic usage description, stylistic or register marking, cultural commentary, and variant forms. This layered structure acknowledges that proverb meaning is not purely denotational but emerges from interaction between metaphor, context, and cultural convention (Moon, 1998). The inclusion of pragmatic notes helps users understand not only what a proverb means, but when, why, and by whom it is used. Variation is another crucial feature of paremiological representation. Proverbs exist in multiple lexical, syntactic, and stylistic variants, which reflect historical development, regional usage, and communicative adaptation. As Taylor (1931)

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observed, the instability of proverb form is a defining characteristic rather than a flaw. Consequently, English paremiological dictionaries increasingly document variants alongside the canonical form, preserving semantic unity while acknowledging linguistic diversity. This approach supports the view of proverbs as dynamic elements of living language rather than fossilized expressions.

From a pragmalinguistic perspective, proverbs function as evaluative and normative statements that regulate social behavior and express collective judgments. Seitel's discourse-oriented approach demonstrates that proverb meaning is activated within specific communicative situations and depends on speaker intention and audience interpretation (Seitel, 1972). Lexicographic representation that includes situational usage and communicative purpose therefore provides a more accurate model of proverb functionality. This is particularly relevant for comparative linguocultural studies, where differences in pragmatic norms may lead to divergent proverb usage despite apparent semantic equivalence.

Corpus-based methodologies have further refined lexicographic representation in contemporary English paremiological dictionaries. Editors such as Speake emphasize frequency, contextual diversity, and real-life usage drawn from written and spoken corpora (Speake, 2015). This empirical approach allows lexicographers to distinguish between archaic, literary, and actively used proverbs, ensuring that dictionary content reflects actual language practice while preserving historically significant forms. As a result, paremiological dictionaries balance synchronic relevance with diachronic depth. In comparative perspective, the alignment of English and Karakalpak proverbs within lexicographic entries demonstrates how universal human experiences such as labor, time, cooperation, and caution are encoded through culturally specific metaphors and value systems. Lexicographic representation makes these similarities and differences explicit by juxtaposing semantic meaning with cultural commentary. Thus, paremiological dictionaries function as tools for cross-cultural interpretation, enabling researchers to trace shared conceptual domains as well as culturally unique evaluative frameworks.

In conclusion, the lexicographic representation of English paremiological dictionaries is characterized by an integrative approach that combines semantic

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explanation, pragmatic function, cultural interpretation, variation, and corpus-based evidence. This comprehensive model supports the treatment of proverb dictionaries as linguocultural texts that encode collective experience, social norms, and national worldviews. Such an approach provides a robust methodological foundation for comparative linguocultural analysis and confirms the central role of paremiological lexicography in understanding the interaction between language, culture, and cognition (Taylor, 1931; Dundes, 1981; Mieder, 2004; Speake, 2015).

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